



आर्कैलॉजिकल
सर्वेय ऑफ इण्डिया
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SURVEY OF INDIA



Let's Explore
**HUMAYUN'S
TOMB**





Let's Explore
**HUMAYUN'S
TOMB**



COPYRIGHT © 2011

Archaeological Survey of India

Government of India

CONCEPTUALISED AND PREPARED BY

Aga Khan Trust for Culture

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Ford Foundation



TEXT ~ Narayani Gupta

ILLUSTRATIONS ~ Anirha Balachandran

EDITORIAL TEAM (AKTC) ~ Deeti Ray, Ratish Nanda, Sanyukta Saha

DESIGN ~ SeeCHANGE.in

PUBLICATION CO-ORDINATION ~ Deeti Ray

PHOTOGRAPH ON COVER ~ Siddhartha Chatterjee

PHOTO GALLERY IMAGES © Aga Khan Trust for Culture

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Dr Yunus Jaffery for translating the chronogram.

Dr Gautam Sengupta, Dr B.R. Mani, Juthika Patankar,

P.K. Trivedi, Arundhati Banerji, Hoshiar Singh of the ASI

Archana Saad Akhtar, Rinkesh Rana, Narendra Swain of AKTC

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of ASI, or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with appropriate reprographic rights organisation.

PRINTED BY India Offset Press, New Delhi

PRICE ₹ 50



Let's Explore
**HUMAYUN'S
TOMB**



WRITTEN BY Narayani Gupta

ILLUSTRATED BY Anitha Balachandran

PUBLISHED BY

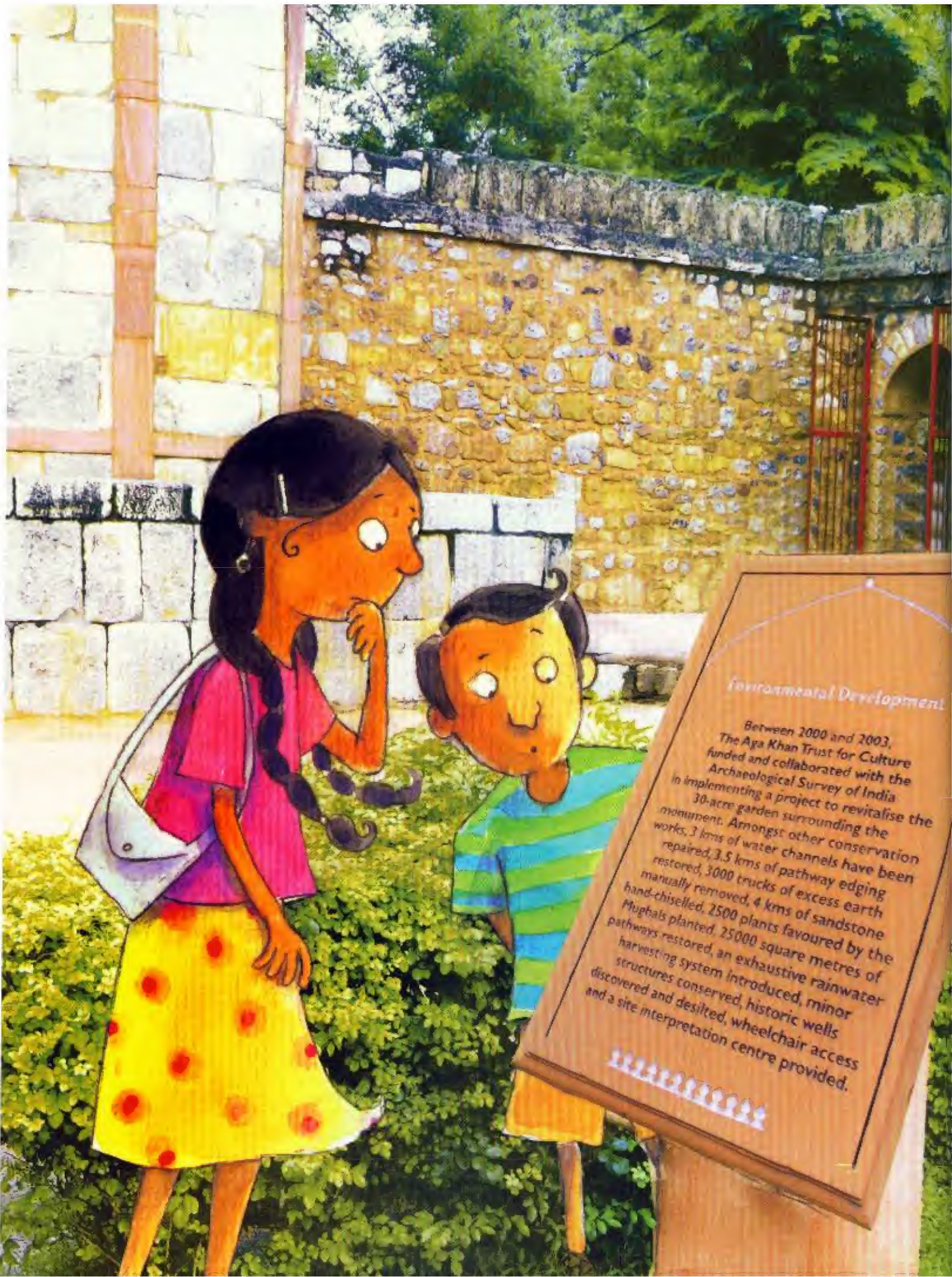


THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

IN COLLABORATION WITH



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE



Environmental Development

Between 2000 and 2003, The Aga Khan Trust for Culture funded and collaborated with the Archaeological Survey of India in implementing a project to revitalise the 30-acre garden surrounding the monument. Amongst other conservation works, 3 kms of water channels have been repaired, 3.5 kms of pathway edging restored, 3000 trucks of excess earth manually removed, 4 kms of sandstone hand-chiselled, 2500 plants favoured by the Mughals planted, 25000 square metres of pathways restored, an exhaustive rainwater harvesting system introduced, minor structures conserved, historic wells discovered and desilted, wheelchair access and a site interpretation centre provided.





FOREWORD



Dr Gautam Sengupta

DIRECTOR GENERAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

ON THE OCCASION of Children's Day 2011, it gives me great pleasure to offer this book to the children of Delhi, and indeed the children visiting this World Heritage Site from the world over.

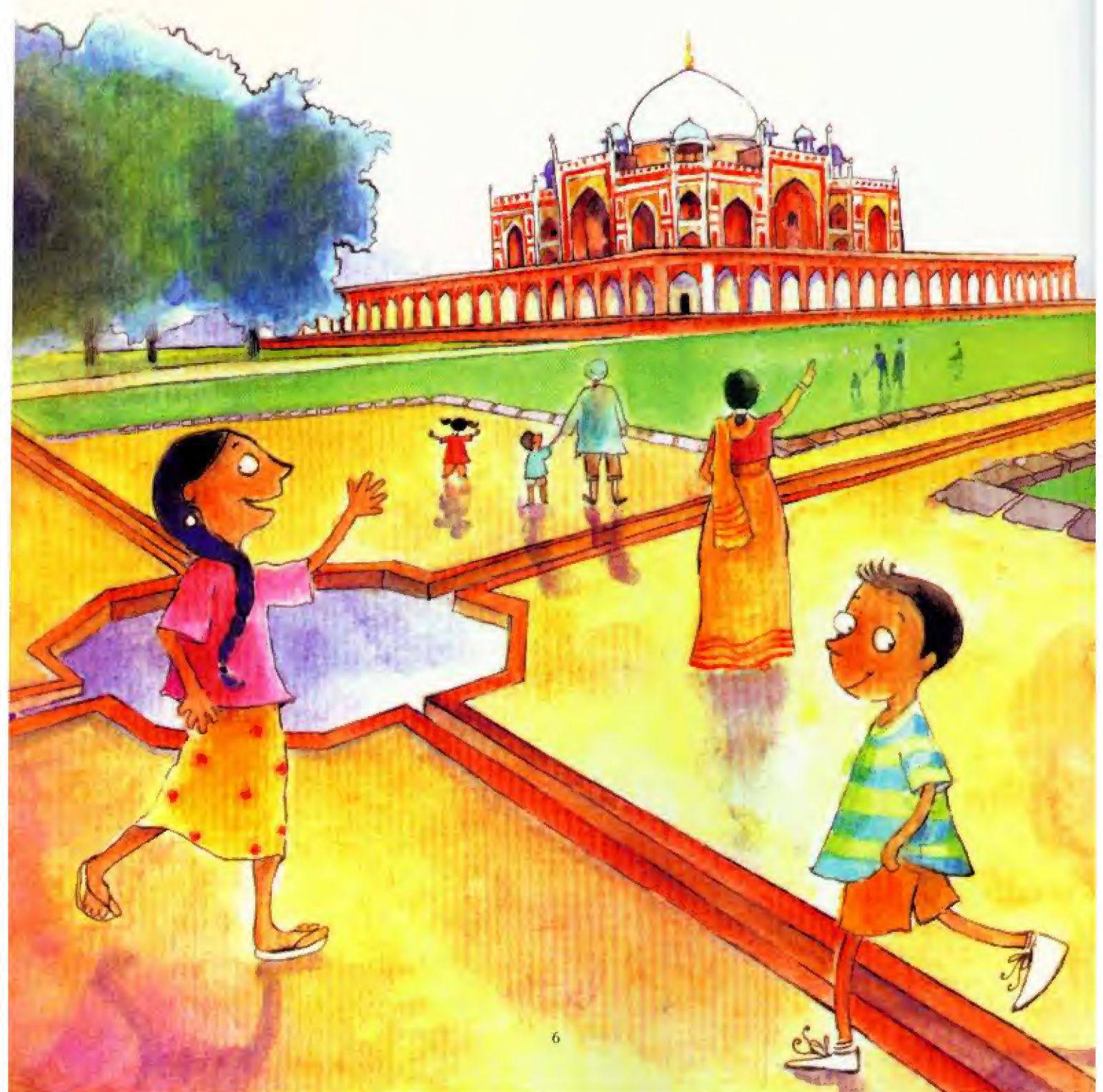
We estimate that over 3,00,000 school children visit Humayun's Tomb every year, who, we hope will enjoy this beautifully illustrated publication that brings alive the site that represents several centuries of history. We believe this book not only gives a better understanding of this wonderful site, but will also inspire children to become associated with the preservation of our country's heritage as architects, artists, engineers, archaeologists, garden designers, and historians.

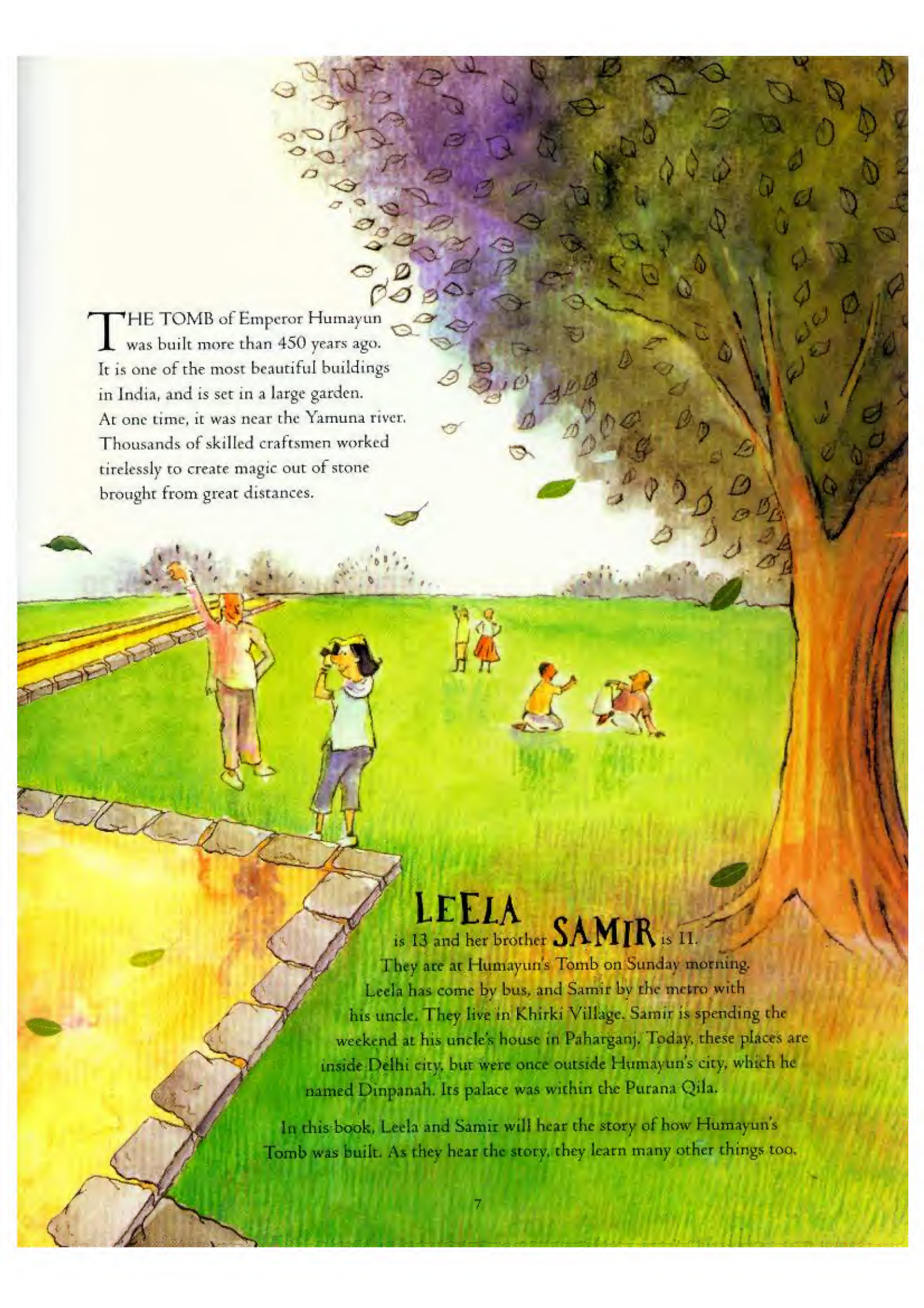
This year also marks 150 years of the Archaeological Survey of India, and what better way to celebrate this anniversary than by launching this first in a series of planned children books.

Humayun's Tomb has been the site of a long-standing partnership between the Archaeological Survey of India and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, which has resulted in the restoration of the gardens and the monuments. I would like to record our appreciation to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture for preparing this publication with support from the Ford Foundation. A special thanks to Ms. Anitha Balachandran for the illustrations, and Dr. Narayani Gupta for conceptualizing and writing the text.

To all children and their families – happy reading!

HUMAYUN'S TOMB





THE TOMB of Emperor Humayun was built more than 450 years ago. It is one of the most beautiful buildings in India, and is set in a large garden. At one time, it was near the Yamuna river. Thousands of skilled craftsmen worked tirelessly to create magic out of stone brought from great distances.

LEELA is 13 and her brother **SAMIR** is 11.

They are at Humayun's Tomb on Sunday morning. Leela has come by bus, and Samir by the metro with his uncle. They live in Khirki Village. Samir is spending the weekend at his uncle's house in Paharganj. Today, these places are inside Delhi city, but were once outside Humayun's city, which he named Dinpanah. Its palace was within the Purana Qila.

In this book, Leela and Samir will hear the story of how Humayun's Tomb was built. As they hear the story, they learn many other things too.



AKBAR

LEELA AND SAMIR also learn how Jalaluddin Akbar, who became Badshah (Emperor) when he was only 13, built the tomb for his beloved father, Humayun.



NIZAMUDDIN'S
DARGAH

This is also a story of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, a place to which thousands of people have been coming for nearly 700 years to get the blessings of the Sufi saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, who once lived here.



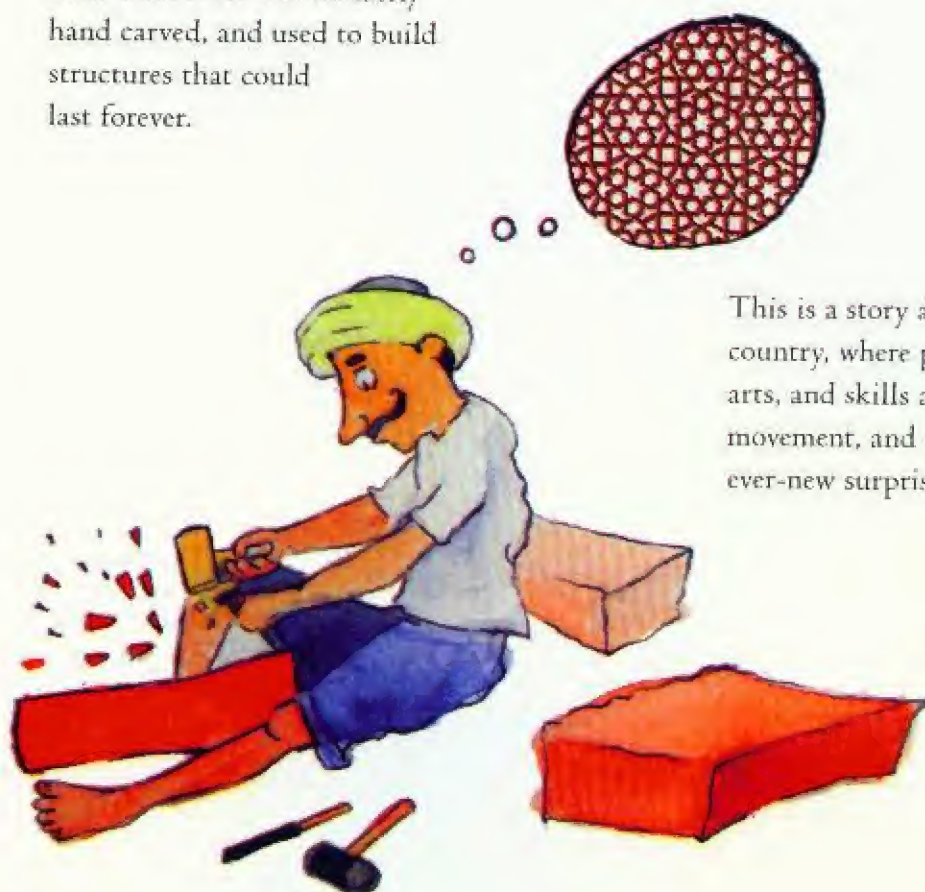
HUMAYUN

It is a story of how the hot dry Delhi region was magically changed by channeling water and planting trees and flowers.



They find out about individuals whose teachings, songs, poems, and sense of beauty have inspired others for centuries; and of people who have changed the way places look, through their skills as engineers and craftsmen.

How hard rock was delicately hand carved, and used to build structures that could last forever.



This is a story about our country, where people, ideas, arts, and skills are in constant movement, and creating ever-new surprises...



RASHTRAPATI
BHAVAN

LAL QILA



FEROZESHAH
KOTLA



PURANA
QILA



HUMAYUN'S
TOMB



SIRI FORT



QUTB MINAR



TUHLAQABAD
FORT



SETTLEMENTS
IN THE DELHI AREA
IN THE LAST THOUSAND YEARS

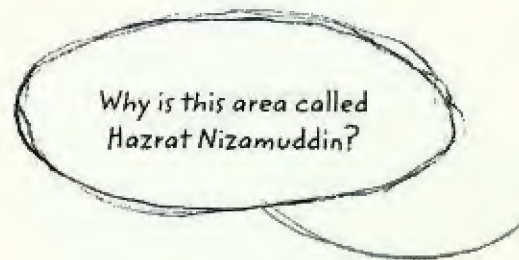
THE CITIES OF DELHI

—— "SEVENTH CITY"
SHAHJAHANABAD

—— "FIFTH CITY"
FEROZABAD

—— "EIGHTH CITY"
NEW DELHI

—— "SIXTH CITY"
DINPANAH
OR PURANA QILA



HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN was a Sufi saint who lived here in early 14th century AD.

It is hard to believe, but 1,00,000 years ago, most of Delhi was a forest. The people who lived here used small stone implements (microliths) as tools and weapons.

Much later, parts of the forest were cleared, and the land was levelled for agriculture. Towns were built. In the last thousand years, some of the towns here had over 50,000 inhabitants. The areas of these towns are now within the large modern Delhi region, where over 14,000,000 people now live.

This entire area still has sections of walls and buildings surviving from the 11th century AD. The rulers lived in fort-palaces, and other people in houses nearby. Some towns had enclosing walls, outside which were orchards, fields, gardens, and tanks to collect rainwater.

The triangle between the hilly Ridge and the Yamuna river was called Delhi. Each time a ruler built a fort here, it quickly grew into a small town, which was known by the name or a title of the ruler. Only Siri and British New Delhi were not named after the rulers (if they had been, the first would have been Khiljiabad, and the second Georgetown!)

—— "SECOND CITY"
SIRI

—— "FOURTH CITY"
JAHANPANAH

—— "FIRST CITY"
LAL KOT

—— "THIRD CITY"
TUGHLAQABAD



BALBAN'S LAL MAHAL

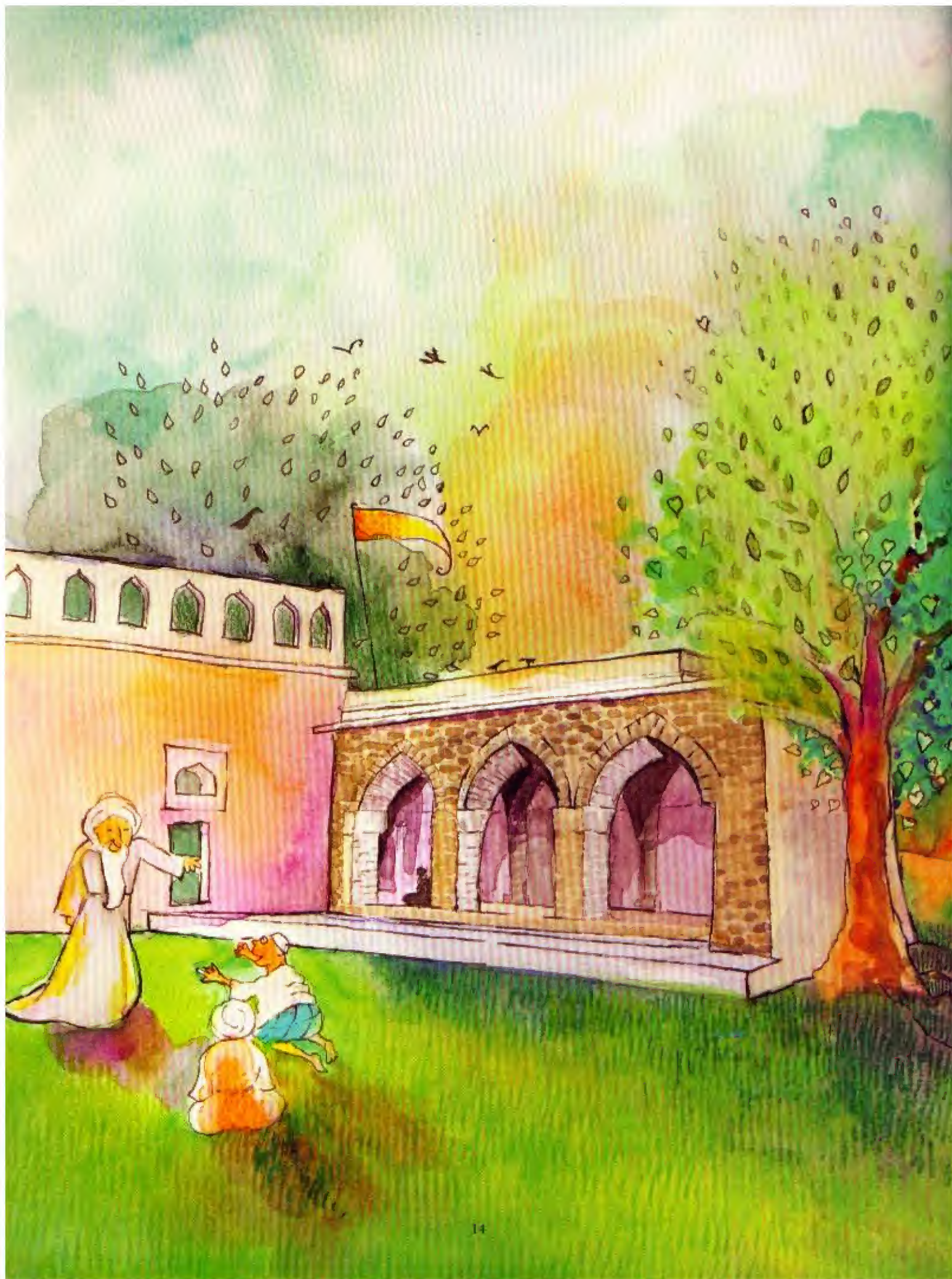
GHIYAS-UD-DIN BALBAN built his palace on the bank of the Yamuna during the reign of Sultan Iltutmish, and the area came to be called Ghiyaspur. Lal Mahal, which is built of red sandstone, is the oldest surviving Islamic palace building in India. Today, it is used as a private house, and is not open to the public.

Later, Balban became Sultan of Delhi, and shifted to the fort Lalkot in Mehrauli.

Many people from other parts of India, and from West and Central Asia, came to Delhi. One of them was a lady called Bibi Zulekha. She came from the town of Badayun, with her five-year old son Nizamuddin (born in AD 1238).

Later, when Hazrat Nizamuddin was 20, he became a disciple of the famous Sufi saint Hazrat Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakkar, also known as Baba Farid, who lived in Ajodhan (now called Pakpattan, in Pakistan).







CHILLA

AFTER Hazrat Nizamuddin finished his studies, he returned to Delhi to live in Ghiyaspur, where he built a *chilla* (a quiet place for meditation) by the river. In the 14th century, the Yamuna was a wide, abundant, sparkling river, teeming with fish, providing water for drinking and bathing, and for irrigating fields and orchards. It was also like a crowded highway because many people travelled by boat to and from Delhi.

As Hazrat Nizamuddin's fame and message of love spread, people from afar came to seek his blessings and listen to his teachings. The Sufi saint urged them to treat everyone as equal, irrespective of religion and caste, and to recognise God's great love. He taught his disciples that the best way to get closer to God was through service to humanity. The Saint soon came to be known as '*Auliya*' (friend of God).

His followers from all religions gathered, stayed, and ate together at the Saint's *khanqaah* (hospice).



THE STORY OF THE BAOLI

Hazrat Nizamuddin began to construct a *baoli* (step well) to ensure year-long water supply for the villagers and pilgrims. In the same year, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq ordered the construction of his capital, Tughlaqabad. The craftsmen would work on building the *baoli* at night. This angered the Sultan, and he ordered that no one should sell oil for *chiraghs* (earthen lamps) that were needed for working at night.

In response, Hazrat Nizamuddin is said to have asked his pupil Nasiruddin to fill the *chiraghs* with water that gushed out in a spring from the ground. By his special power, the wicks caught flame. The *baoli* was built, and Nasiruddin was given the title 'Chiragh e Dilli' (the Light of Delhi).

When Hazrat Nizamuddin passed away in 1325, he was buried near the *baoli*, and the name of Ghiyaspur was changed to Nizamuddin.



NIZAMUDDIN AND AMIR KHUSRAU

THE POET Amir Khusrau was Hazrat Nizamuddin's favourite disciple.

Hazrat Nizamuddin and Khusrau were sitting one morning on the banks of the Yamuna, looking at the people bathing and worshipping the sun. Hazrat Nizamuddin said to Khusrau:

Har qaum raast raah-e, deen-e wa qibla gaah-e.
All people have their paths and focus of worship.

Like Hazrat Nizamuddin, Khusrau (born in 1253) had lost his father when he was a child, and was raised at the Sultan's court. He knew many languages, and wrote in Persian and Hindawi. He is said to have designed the sitar and the tabla. He also created the tradition of *qawwali* – songs of devotion sung in honour of Hazrat Nizamuddin.

*Pawan chalat web dehe badbavay
Jal preevat web jeev garvavay
Hai web piyari sundar naar,
Naar nabin par hai web naar.*

Aag!

With the movement of the wind she flares up,
And dies as soon as she drinks water.
Even though she is a pretty woman,
She's not a woman, though she's feminine.

HE! WAH!

Fire!





Khusrau is said to have grieved so deeply at the death of Hazrat Nizamuddin, that he died soon after, and was buried near the *dargah* (shrine) of his beloved Saint.

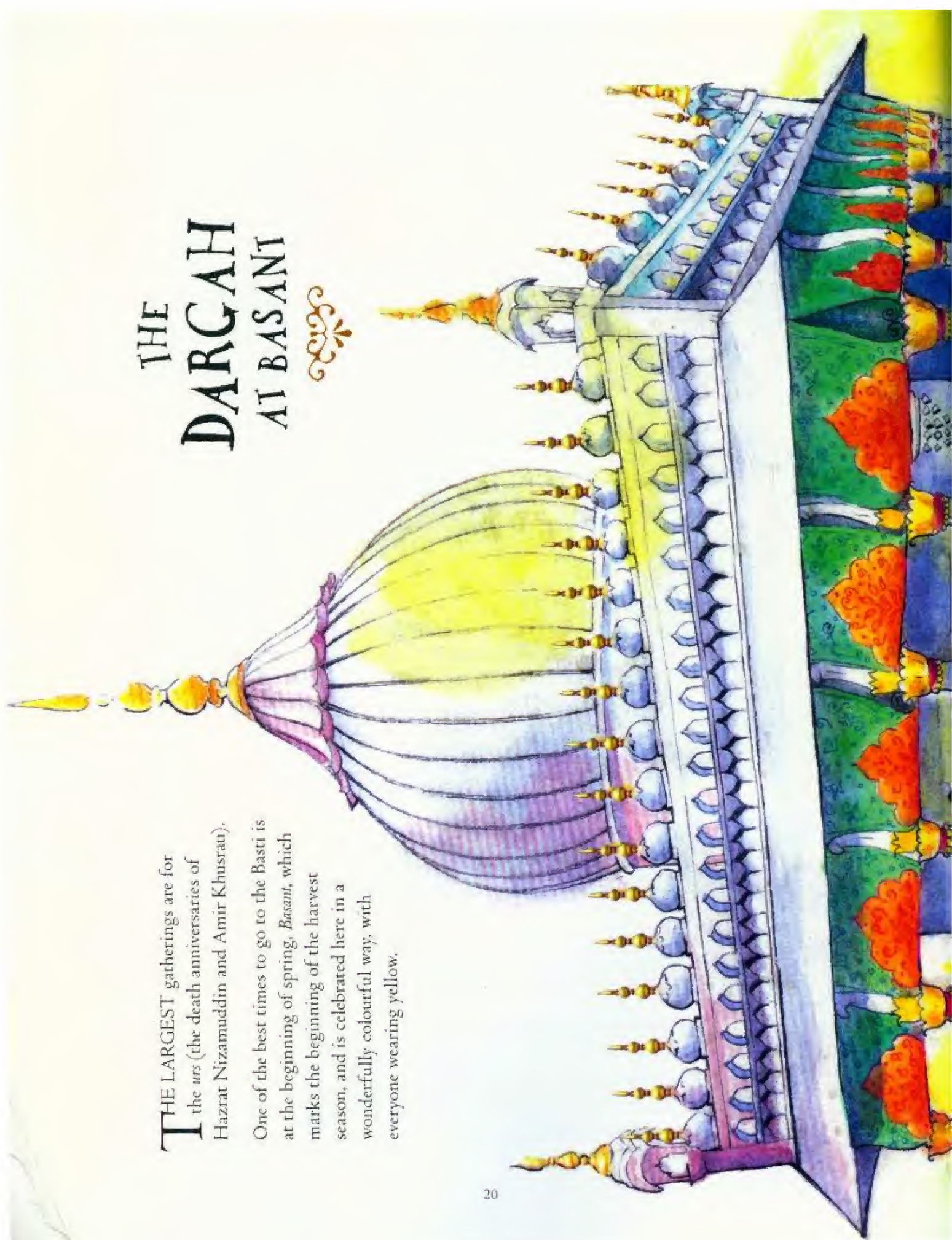
Hazrat Nizamuddin and Amir Khusrau's passing left an emptiness, but the spirit of the Saint was still very real to people. Century after century, hundreds of followers continued to come throughout the year to the *dargah* in Nizamuddin Basti. His descendants and followers have kept up the tradition of hospitality, and the songs of the qawwal still ring out on Thursday evenings.

THE DARGAH AT BASANT

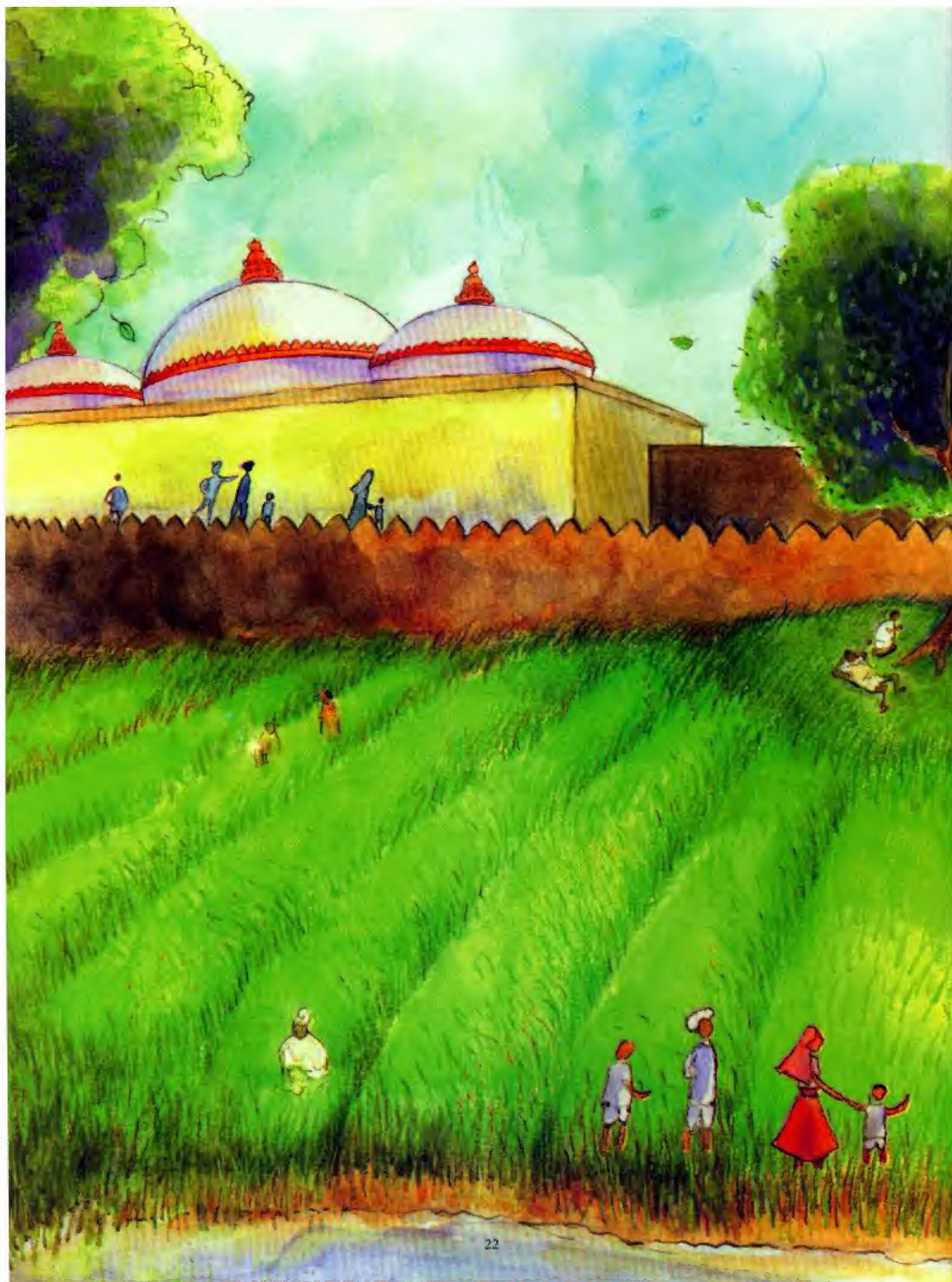


THE LARGEST gatherings are for the *urs* (the death anniversaries of Hazrat Nizamuddin and Amir Khusrau).

One of the best times to go to the Basti is at the beginning of spring, *Basant*, which marks the beginning of the harvest season, and is celebrated here in a wonderfully colourful way, with everyone wearing yellow.







KUSHAK NALLAH



IN ADDITION to those who visited Hazrat Nizamuddin's dargah, many scholars, writers, traders and craftspeople from other regions of India and Asia also kept coming to Delhi.

The bazaars in the city were always crowded. At the time, much of Delhi was fields, gardens, and orchards – all irrigated by canals. The Kushak Nallah (a waterway extending from what is today called Saket, to Nizamuddin, and then the Yamuna) brought water and greenery.

As the number of people in the city increased, more places were needed for prayer. Khan-e-Jahan Tilangani, the minister of Sultan Ferozeshah Tughlaq, built seven mosques in Delhi. One of these was in the Nizamuddin area, where Tilangani's tomb stands.

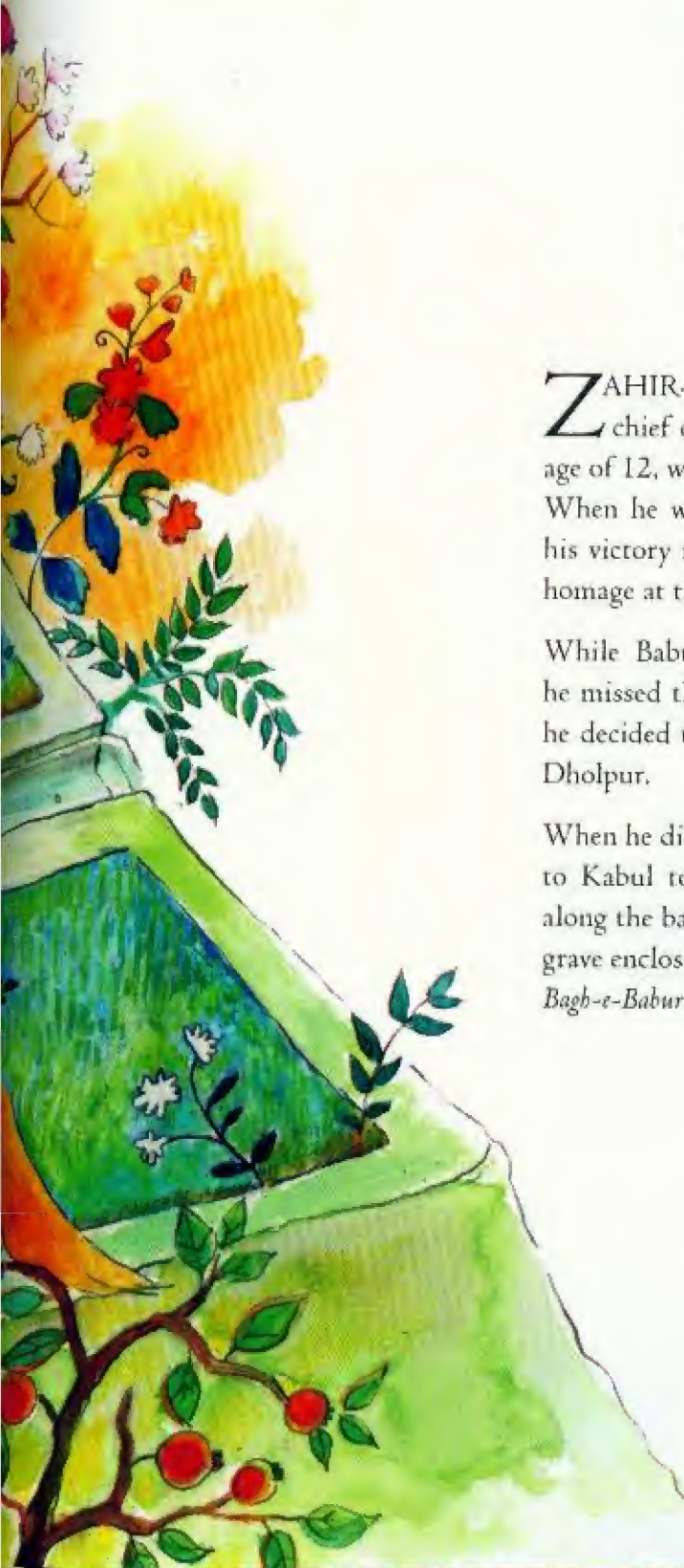
The Tughlaq rulers were followed by the Sayyids, and then by the Lodis. The last Lodi king, Ibrahim, was defeated by the king of Kabul, Zahir-ud-din Babur, at Panipat in 1526.





A wide, ornate border with a repeating floral pattern in shades of green, yellow, and brown surrounds the central text area.

BABUR IN HIS GARDEN

A watercolor illustration on the left side of the page depicts a terraced garden. It features a green stone wall, a path, and various plants including red flowers, green leaves, and small white blossoms. A bright yellow sun is visible in the upper left background.

ZAHIR-UD-DIN Babur had become the ruling chief of Farghana (today in Uzbekistan) at the age of 12, when his father, Omar Sheikh Mirza, died. When he was 21, he conquered Kabul. Later, after his victory in Panipat, he travelled to Delhi to offer homage at the Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin.

While Babur was busy establishing his kingdom, he missed the gardens of Kabul and Samarqand. So he decided to lay out gardens in Agra, Gwalior, and Dholpur.

When he died in 1530, the emperor's body was taken to Kabul to be buried in a lovely terraced garden along the banks of the Kabul river, in a white marble grave enclosure, open to the sky. This is known as the *Bagh-e-Babur* (Garden of Babur).



READING THE BABURNAMA

BABUR wrote in his diary that on Tuesday April 23, 1526:

"I circumambulated Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya's tomb, and camped beside the Jamuna directly opposite Delhi. That evening I toured the Delhi fortress [Ferozeshah Kotla], where I spent the night. The next morning, Wednesday, I circumambulated Khwaja Qutbuddin's tomb [at Mehrauli] and toured Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban's and Sultan Alauddin Khalji's tombs, buildings and minaret [the Qutb Minar], the Hauz Shamsi, the Hauz Khas, and Sultan Bahlol's and Sultan Sikander's tombs and gardens."





BABUR

AND HIS SON

BABUR was a strong and active man, and people could not believe it when they heard that he had died at the age of 47. Later they heard what had happened - his son Humayun fell ill, and the doctors could find no way to save his life. At this point someone told the Emperor that in India people believed that if you offer your most precious possession to God, you can pray to Him to accept it and spare the life of someone you love. When Babur agreed, people thought he would offer the Koh-i-Noor diamond. Babur smiled. "I can't offer God a stone!" he said. He prayed to God to accept his own life in exchange for that of Humayun.

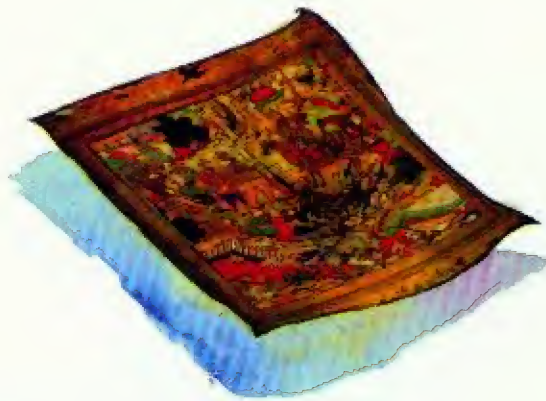
He walked round his son's bed, and Humayun recovered slowly. Babur became weak and ill. He died on 26 December 1530.



THE FORT OF DINPANAH

BADSHAH HUMAYUN decided to build a new city that he named Dinpanah (Refuge of the Faith). Its palace-fort was on the Yamuna, near Hazrat Nizamuddin's dargah, and is now called Purana Qila.

Humayun shared his father's love of gardens and flowers. He also had a passion for astronomy, and for reading. He collected handwritten and hand-painted books.







A BAZAAR ON BOATS



ONE of Humayun's inventions was the *chabar taq* barge (boat). The boat makers constructed several large barges. On both sides of each boat, shops were built, and in the centre, a large market with a central hall was arranged. Royal orders were issued to people of all professions and arts that they should open their shops on these barges. Abul Fazl, a historian at the court of Emperor Akbar, wrote that a market was flourishing on the river.

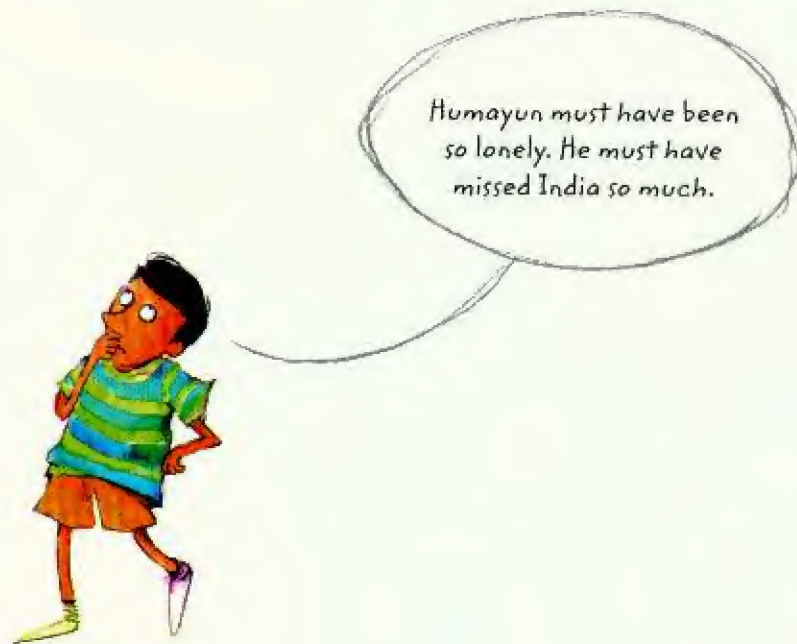


Humayun had never imagined that his life was going to be a struggle. He had to fight many battles. His kingdom stretched from Afghanistan to Bihar. Then Humayun decided to conquer Bengal as well. On his route was Bihar, governed by a clever person called Sher Khan. He let the emperor reach Bengal, and then blocked the road so that he could not return. From that time on, Sher Khan captured more and more of the emperor's kingdom. After losing a battle at Kanauj, Humayun left India, and Sher Khan became king at Delhi. He called himself Sher Shah.

After Sher Shah moved to Delhi, Humayun became homeless. With a small group of faithful supporters, he travelled through Sind, and reached Persia (Iran). He did not know then that 13 years would pass before he saw Delhi again.



HUMAYUN THE WANDERER



In Persia, Humayun was not alone. His wife and close friends were with him, and the king of Persia, Shah Tahmasp, treated him as an honoured guest. He stayed in comfortable tents, set in spacious gardens with flowing water. Seeing the beautiful gardens, he understood why his father had enjoyed planning gardens. He also admired the miniature paintings by Persian artists, and eventually persuaded many of them to accompany him back to Delhi – amongst these artists were Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad. This led to Indian artists painting miniatures in the form that is called Mughal art.

A NOTE ON THE WORD 'MUGHAL'

Sometimes words are used incorrectly. Babur never called himself a Mughal. He referred to himself as Timurid – a descendant of Timur, the Central Asian emperor of 14th century AD. The Portuguese merchants in India called Babur and his descendants, as well as the things connected with them – food, art, and architecture – Mughal, which is a variation of the word 'Mongol.'



KING FOR A DAY

IN 1539 Humayun was defeated in a battle at Chausa, in Bihar.




As his army retreated, the Emperor's horse slipped and fell into the Ganga. The horse drowned, and Humayun was tossed around in the surging waters. Nizam, a *bhishti** (water carrier) was standing on the bank. He saw what had happened. He quickly inflated his buffalo-skin water bag and swam into the river. Humayun clutched the bag and the *bhishti* helped him to reach the shore.

Humayun was very moved, and said to Nizam "You saved my life. I promise you that when I go back to Agra, I shall give you my throne for one day."

The water carrier bowed and said humbly, "Please, I do not want any reward. That you should be safe is all I wanted." But Humayun was firm. "You have shown such love for your Emperor. You deserve not only my throne for a day, but my eternal gratitude."

He kept his promise. Nizam was taken to Agra, and did sit on the throne of the Emperor for one day and enjoyed all the powers of the ruler.

* To give water to people is seen as a noble act, and a water-carrier is called 'bhishti' - someone who deserves to go to Heaven/bihisht.



THE DEATH OF HUMAYUN



Thirteen years after he was exiled, Humāyun did recapture Delhi, and was able to complete building the palace-fort of Dinpanah. But sadly, he lived there only a year. On 27 January, 1556, he died after a fall on the very steep steps of his library. He was then 48 years old.





WHO WAS HAJI BEGUM?



Who built the tomb
for Humayun?

The inscription says
it was built by Haji Begum. 'Haji' means
someone who went on the Haj pilgrimage
to Mecca. It could have been either
of the two queens.

I have read that it was
his wife, but which one? Akbar's mother
was Hamida Bano, and his stepmother
was Bega Begum.

Anyway, the money must
have been given by Emperor Akbar.
Imagine, Leela. Akbar became badshah
when he was your age – 13!







AKBAR AND THE ARCHITECT

THE 13-YEAR OLD AKBAR became badshah in 1556. Once he had made his empire secure, he turned his attention to commemorating his father. At his request, his aunt Gulbadan Begum wrote *Humayun-nama*, the story of Humayun's life.

He also wanted to build a grand tomb for Humayun.

There were three things to be decided:

Where should the tomb be built?

Who should be the architect?

And what should it look like?

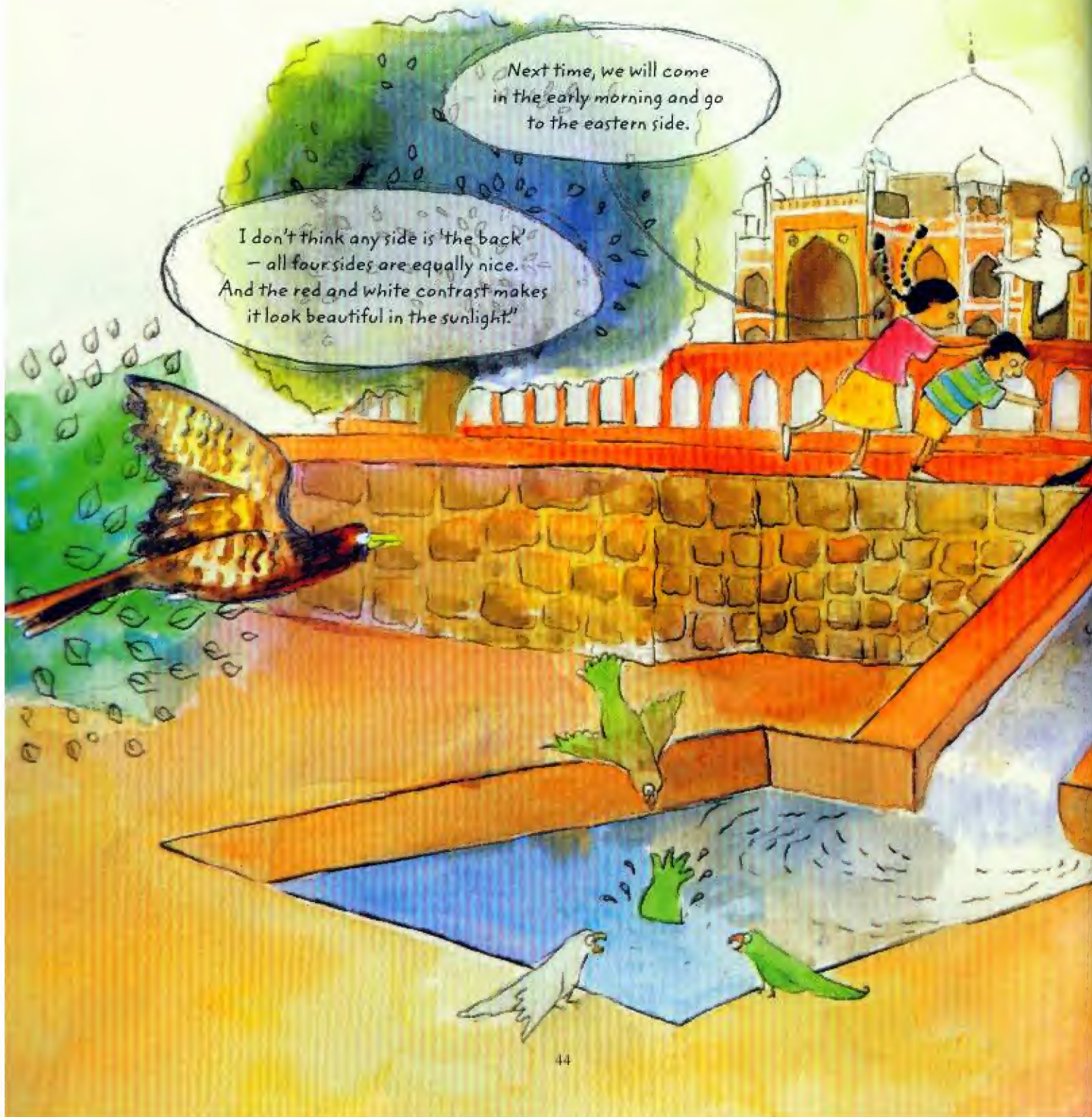
The first was not difficult – the tomb would be in a sacred area, near Hazrat Nizamuddin's dargah. This was also near Dinpanah.

The architect chosen was Mirza Muhammad Ghiyas from the Persian city of Herat.

The design was thus influenced by Persian architecture, and was grander than anything built before in Delhi, or any Muslim tomb in other countries.

EMPEROR AKBAR wanted the tomb to be set in a walled garden with flowing water and trees bearing flowers and fruit. Such a garden would represent Paradise as described in the Holy Quran. In Farsi, the word for a garden enclosed within a wall is *firdaus* or *pairi daeza*. This word became 'paradise' in English.

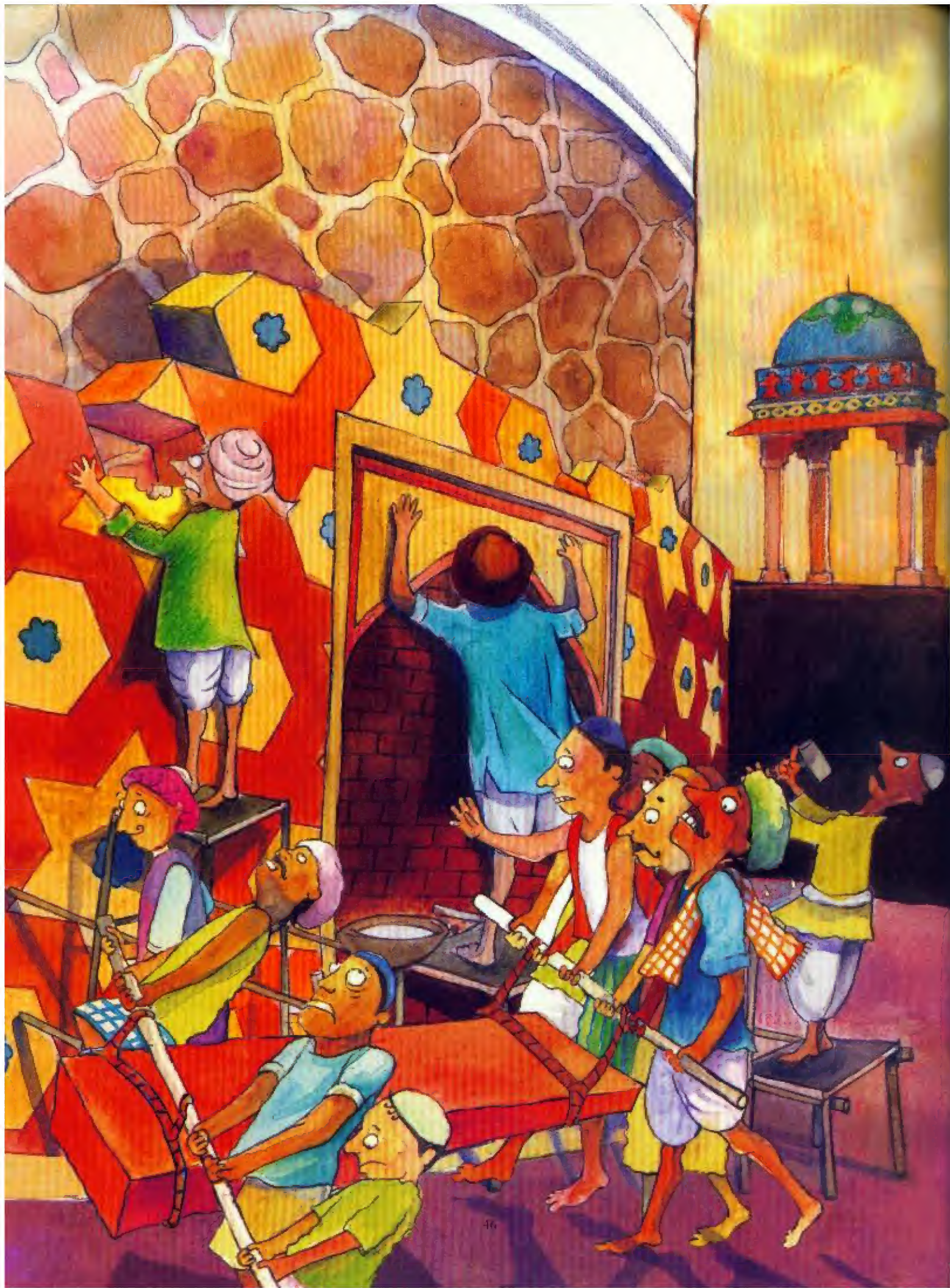
Ghiyas' design for the tomb building had Persian architectural details, built with Indian materials – red sandstone and white marble was used in great quantities.



PARADISE ON EARTH

Mosques and tombs are designed in a manner that allows visitors to face Mecca, in the west. In Humayun's Tomb, the four sides of the building face west, north, east, and south. The eastern side is brightly lit by the morning sun, and the western side glows pink in the evening light.

You mean the back of the tomb?



CONSTRUCTING THE TOMB

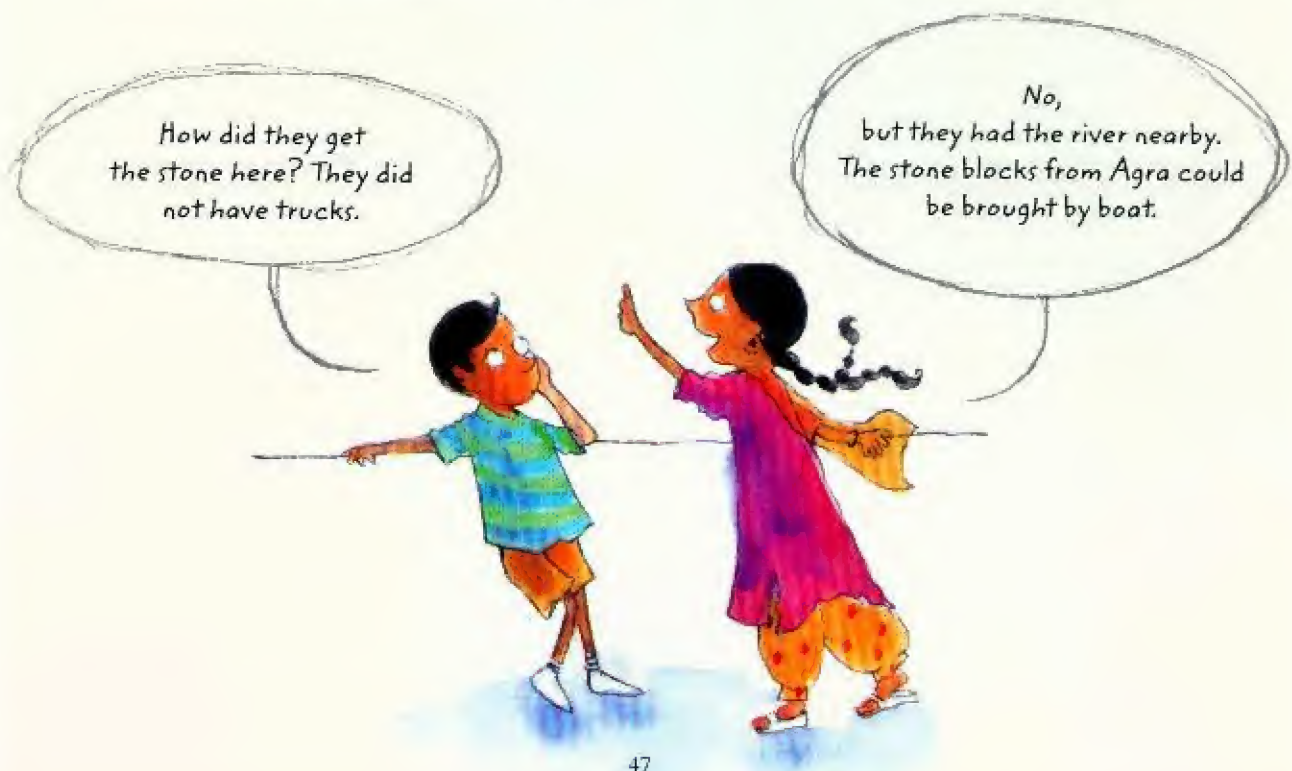
STONE had been used for buildings in India a thousand years before Humayun's Tomb was designed. It was used in different ways – as solid blocks to make walls, or cut thin as a covering for buildings made of brick or rubble.

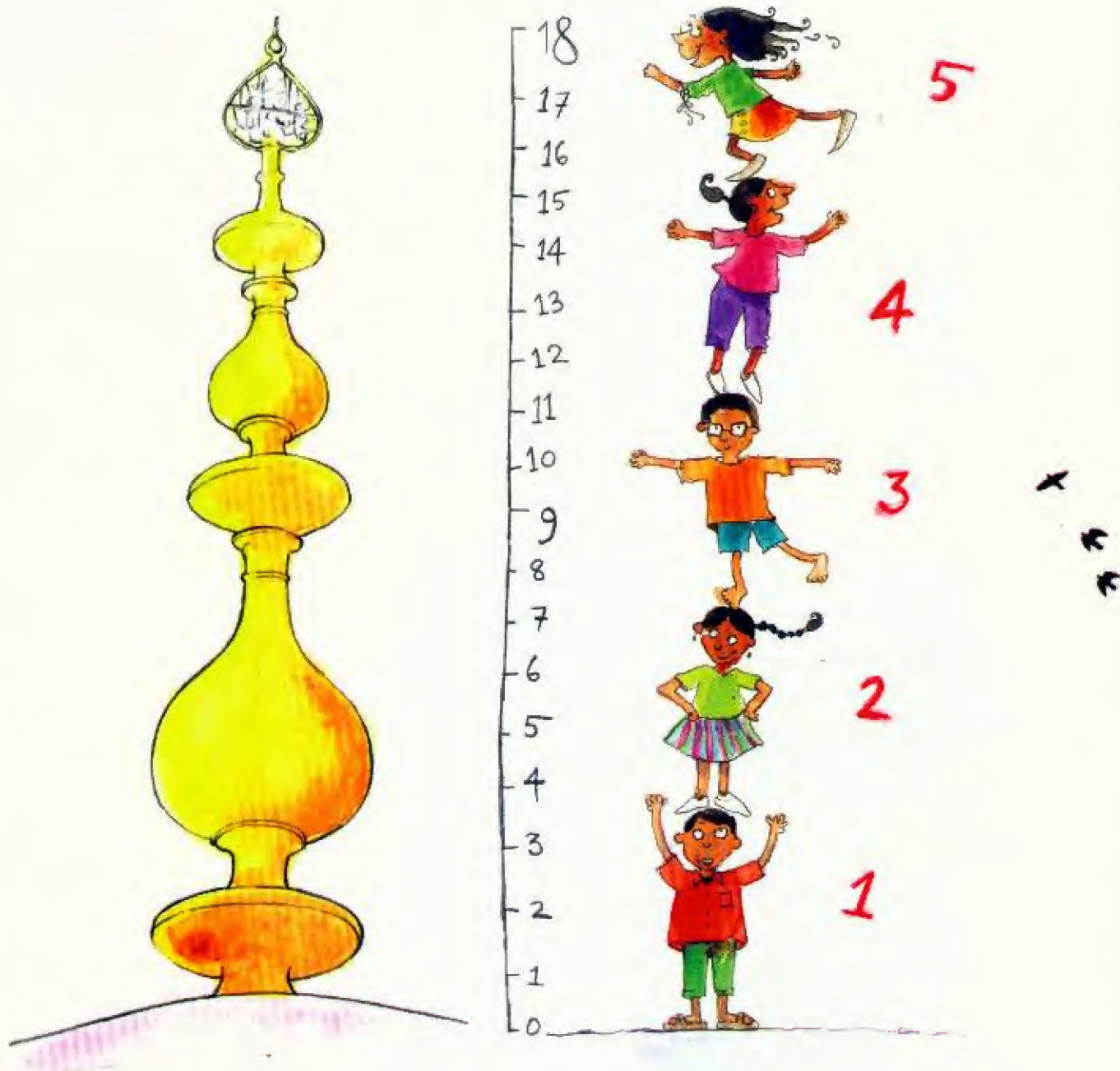
Different kinds of stone give walls different textures and colours. Sandstone – pink, dull red, or yellow – was used in North India, and is still being used. Ghiyas chose red sandstone and white marble to cover the walls, which were made of the strong, grey Delhi quartzite. These were quite different from modern walls. They were 15 feet thick!

Blue, green, white, and yellow tiles – the kind made in Central Asia – covered the chhatris (umbrella-shaped cupolas) on the roof and the walls of the tomb chamber.

The dome was covered in white marble, which was brought by bullock cart from Rajasthan, 400 miles away.

The tomb was completed in seven years (1565-72), and cost Rs. 15 lakh. Today, it would cost over Rs. 1,500 crores to build!

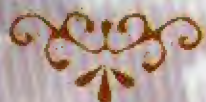


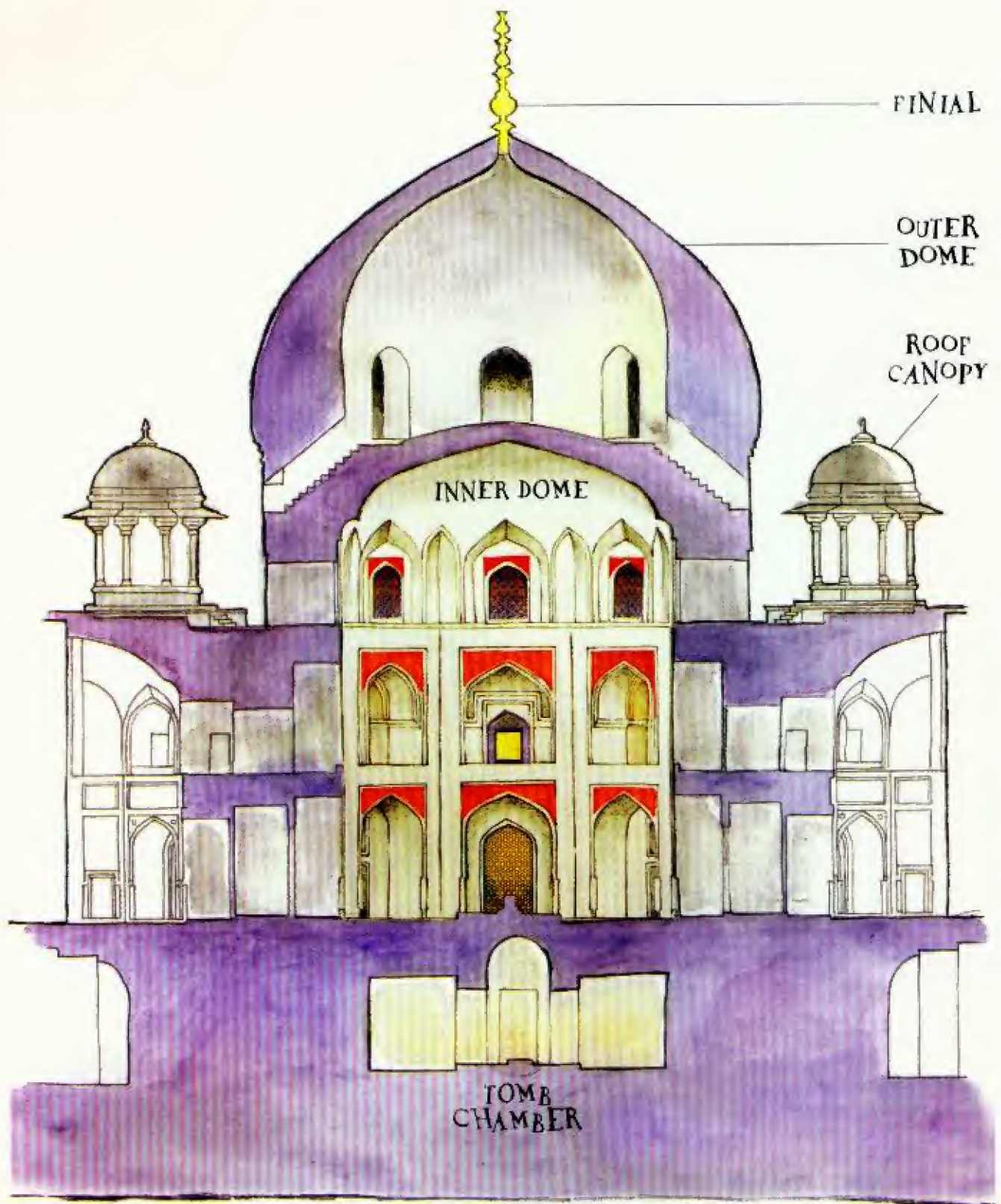


HUMAYUN'S TOMB is 140 feet high – equal to a 14-floor building! And the gold finial above the dome is 18 feet high – as tall as a two-storied house!

The building does not appear 'monumental' because it is brought to human scale by the clever use of big and small arches. The corners of the building were gently rounded or 'chamfered,' so that the square became an octagon.

THE AMAZING
FINIAL





CROSS-SECTION OF HUMAYUN'S TOMB

THE GREAT DOUBLE DOME



The dome lifts the building to twice its height. The neck of the dome, clad in beautiful patterns with two shades of sandstone, is hidden behind the roof pavilions and canopies.

When you look at the tomb from the garden, the dome seems very big. But if you look up at it from inside the tomb-chamber, it is smaller. Why?

This is because there are TWO domes, one inside the other; like a small bowl inside a bigger one. The outer dome makes the building look grand. The smaller dome makes it possible to hear sounds clearly. In the old days, prayers used to be recited in the chamber. The sound of the words would have got lost and been indistinct if they were carried all the way up to the outer dome.

DECORATION IN THE DETAIL

THE architect Ghiyas used the red-and-white contrast of sandstone and marble very effectively. The building was decorated by clever use of lime plasterwork and ceramic tiles. Images of living forms are forbidden in Islam, so the decorative motifs are geometric and plant patterns.

In Islamic buildings in many countries we see decorative six-sided stars. In Humayun's Tomb the stars on the main arches have a raised marble lotus in the centre.

SIX-SIDED
STAR

KANGURA
(ORNAMENTAL BAND)

AN ARCHED DOORWAY





THE CEILING

The entrance to the central chamber has a ceiling of coloured plaster designed like the leaves of a palm-tree.



'GULDASTA' (BUNCH OF FLOWERS)

THE CENOTAPH

HUMAYUN'S GRAVE is in the lower floor of the tomb, as the body always has to be buried below the ground. What visitors see in the chamber is the marble cenotaph positioned directly above the grave.

The main tomb chamber is lit softly by the light coming through the carved *jaalis* (latticed screens), which make patterns on the floor. The *jaalis* also allow the breeze to enter, keeping the chamber cool in the summer.



If we imagine the tomb-chamber as a cave, and the *jaali* as a spider's web, it reminds us of an incident described in the Holy Quran:

Prophet Muhammed and his companion Abu Bakr were travelling from Mecca to Medina, when they were attacked. They quickly took refuge in a cave, and while they were inside, a spider spun a silvery web across the cave's entrance.

Their enemies reached the cave. Seeing the spider's web, they thought that no one had entered the cave and rode away, leaving the Prophet and Abu Bakr unharmed.



HOW TO READ CHRONOGRAMS

MOST tombs have inscriptions from the Quran but do not tell us who they were built for.

Some cenotaphs have short inscriptions – to give the date of the person's death. Such an inscription is called a chronogram.



I cannot understand how.

In 4 languages - Latin, Hebrew, Arabic and Persian - each letter has a numerical value.

The 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet, and their values

a/ā	1	ا	y/ī	10	ي	q	100	ق
b	2	ب	k	20	ك	r	200	ر
j	3	ج	l	30	ل	sh	300	ش
d	4	د	m	40	م	t	400	ت
h	5	ه	n	50	ن	th	500	ث
w/ū	6	و	s	60	س	kh	600	خ
z	7	ز	i	70	ع	dh	700	ذ
H	8	ح	f	80	ف	D	800	ض
T	9	ط	S	90	ص	Z	900	ظ
						gh	1000	غ

You can add up the numerical values of all the letters in any sentence. A clever writer can make the numbers add up to a number which is a date.

Humayun's cenotaph does not have any inscription.

A poet called Kahi made up a sentence in Persian
which gave the date of Humayun's death.

همایون پادشاه از بام افتاد

Humaayuun paadshaah az baam uftaad
Humayun badshah fell from the roof

Now let us add up the values of the letters in this sentence.

H=5	p=2	a=1	b=2	a=1
m=40	a=1	z=7	a=1	f=80
a=1	d=4		m=40	t=400
y=10	sh=300			a=1
u=6	a=1			d=4
n=50	h=5			
112	313	8	43	486

Total=962

The date 962 AH (*anno Hegirae*, referring to the Islamic calendar)
= 1554/5 CE (Common Era).

This is the year of Humayun's death.



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



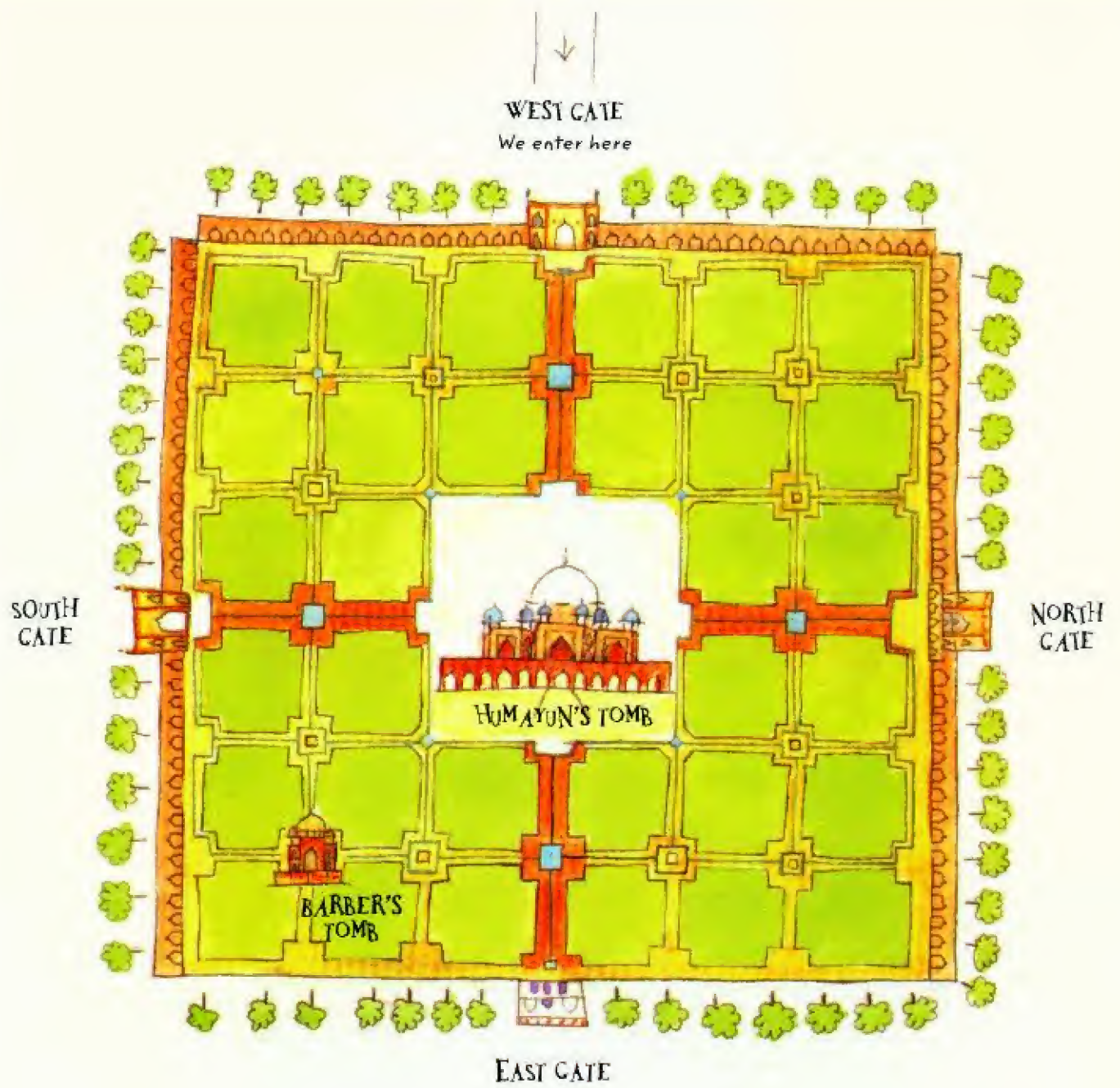
THE TOMB is set in a large garden enclosed by 18-feet high walls. The garden design was inspired by the Persian *chahar bagh*, also known as *char bagh* in Urdu or four-fold garden in English. The water channels represent the four rivers of Paradise, as described in the Holy Quran.

Like the tomb, the square garden is large and yet does not appear big. This is because it is divided into 32 small squares, with the tomb covering the space of four squares.

The squares are separated by paths. The four main geographical axes are the broadest. Running along their length, down the centre of these paths are channels of water. Even in the hottest months of the year, the garden is cool because of the channels and fountains.

There are platforms at the intersections where the channels cross. Tents were pitched here for visitors. The water flowing all around made for natural air-conditioning.

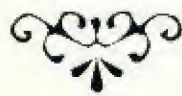




The river Yamuna used to flow here!



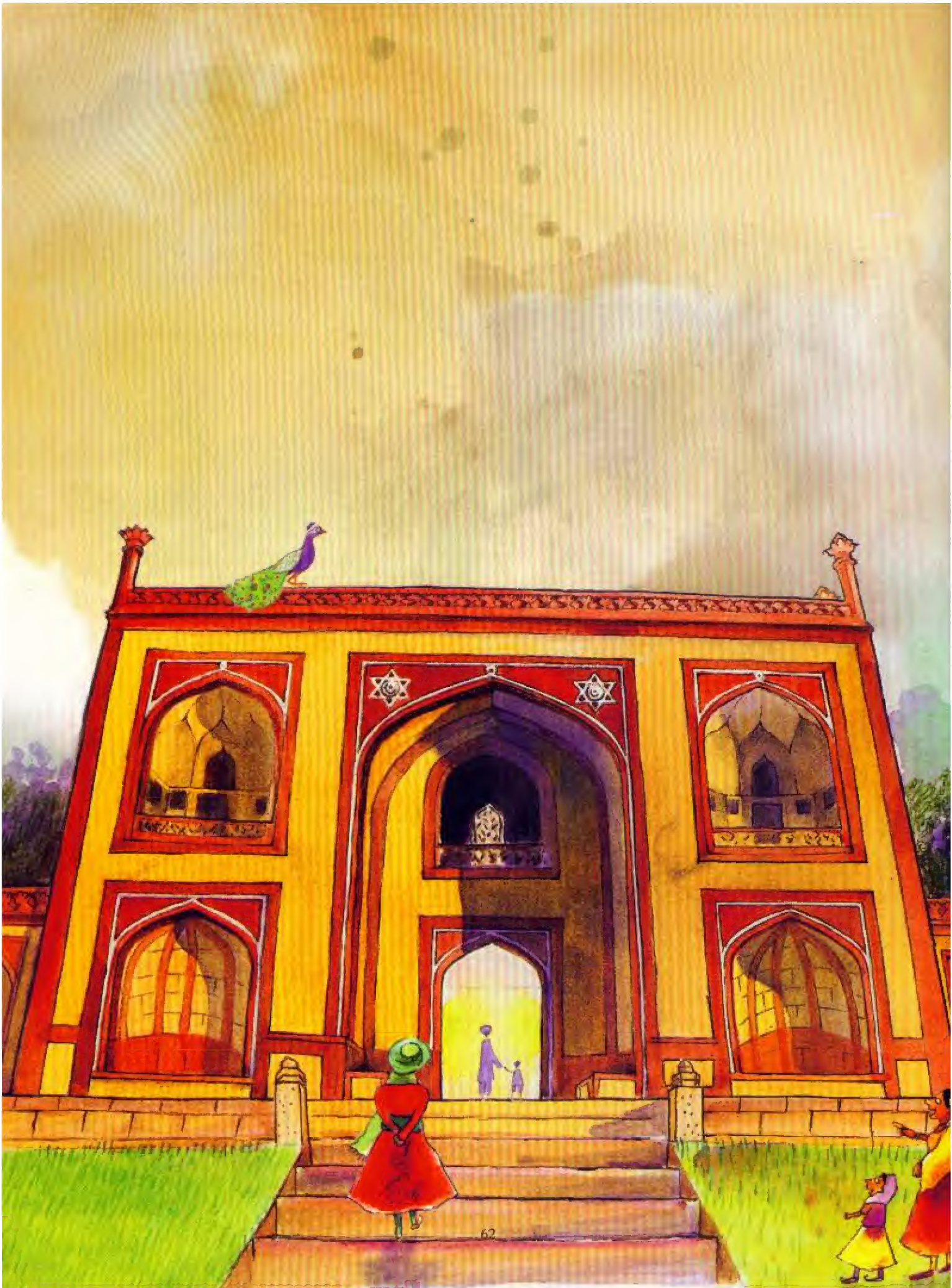
THE CARPET GARDEN



IN Persia and Kashmir carpets are woven with garden designs, representing a *char bagh*. The carpet weavers carefully copied the flowers that were planted in the gardens, and when such a carpet was spread inside a tent, the garden would seem to continue inside.

Historians have mentioned that orange, lime, pomegranate, hibiscus, neem, and mango trees were planted at Humayun's Tomb.





THE SOUTH GATE



There are two gateways
to the garden. But they
look different. Why?

THE SOUTH GATEWAY, which was used by members of the royal family, is wider and higher than the west gateway.

On the east, instead of a gateway, there is a pavilion where the breeze from the Yamuna could be enjoyed. To the north is a pavilion through which water was lifted from a well just outside and brought into the garden.

The garden wall was kept low so that visitors standing on the platform of the tomb could see the river. Today, we cannot see the river because its course has changed, and it flows further east.



A VISITOR'S ACCOUNT

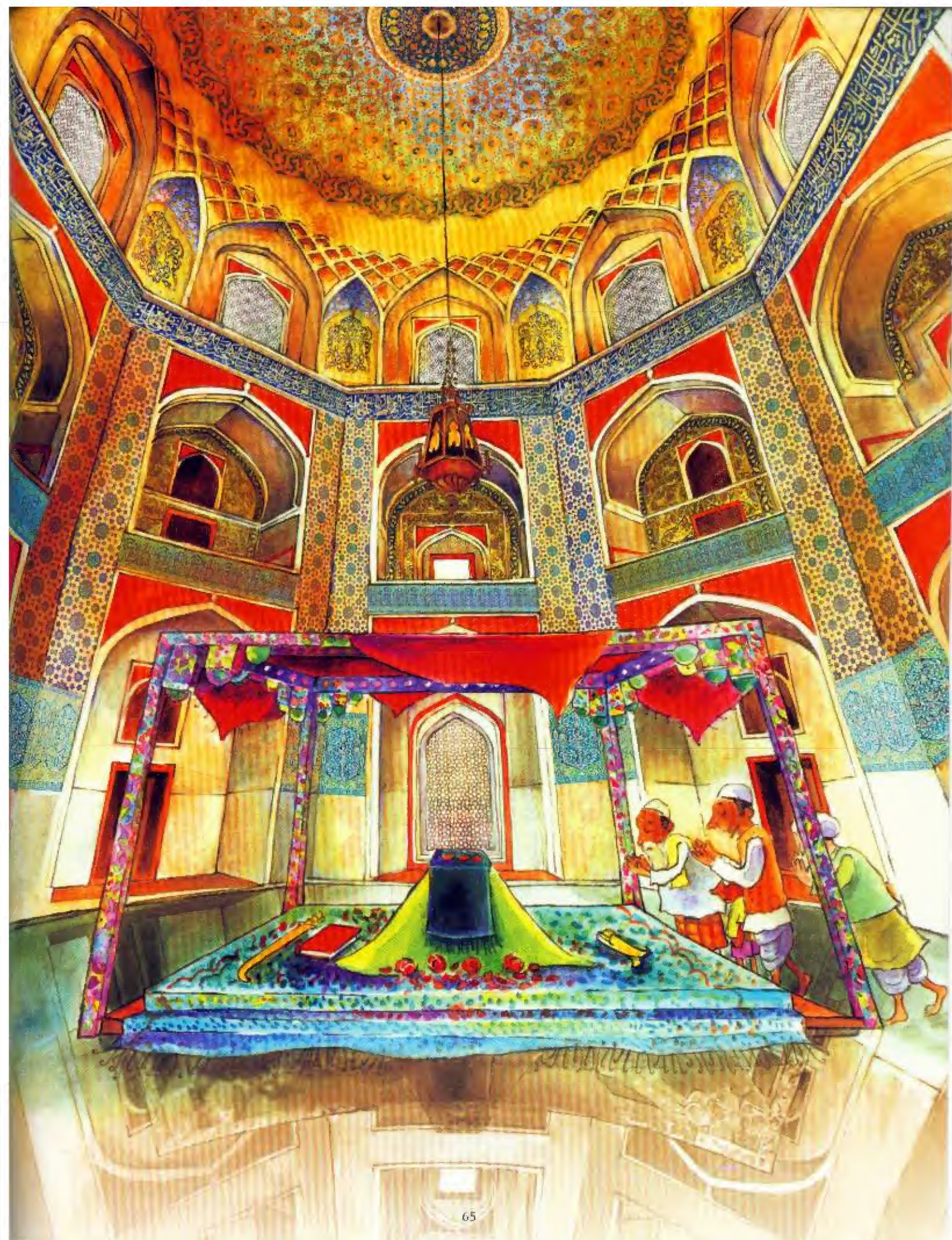


AKBAR did not live permanently in any one city. He stayed for many months in Lahore and Agra, and spent a lot of time travelling through his empire. He often visited Delhi to pay homage at his father's tomb and at the Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

It was recorded by a historian that: In 1578, Akbar set out from Sultanpur Khizrabad. The camp and soldiers went by land, he by river. After a journey of five days, he reached Delhi. He visited Humayun's Tomb and then got back on the boat.

Thirty years later, William Finch, an English visitor, described the tomb's central chamber: "A large room spread with rich carpets, the tomb itself covered with a pure white sheet, a rich *shamiana* overhead, and in front books on small trestles, beside which stand his sword, turban and shoes."





ACRA FORT



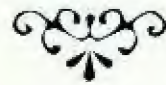
FATEHPUR
SIKRI



HUMAYUN'S
TOMB



IMPERIAL BUILDINGS

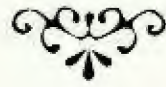


HUMAYUN'S TOMB was only one of the many buildings constructed during Akbar's reign. The huge fort in Agra, and Fatehpur (City of Victory) at Sikri, next to the shrine of another Sufi saint, Salim Chishti, whom Akbar revered, were two other big projects.

Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Emperor Shah Jahan, Akbar's grandson, died tragically young, when her children were still small. The emperor's architect designed a tomb for her – the Taj Mahal. You can see that this was partly modelled on Humayun's Tomb.

Babur's love for gardens was shared by his descendants. In Srinagar, Akbar laid out Naseem Bagh (*naseem* means pleasant breezes); his son Jahangir created the Shalimar (Place of Joy); while Shah Jahan built the Nishaat Bagh (*nishaat* means energy, pleasure, cheerfulness).

DESERTED DELHI

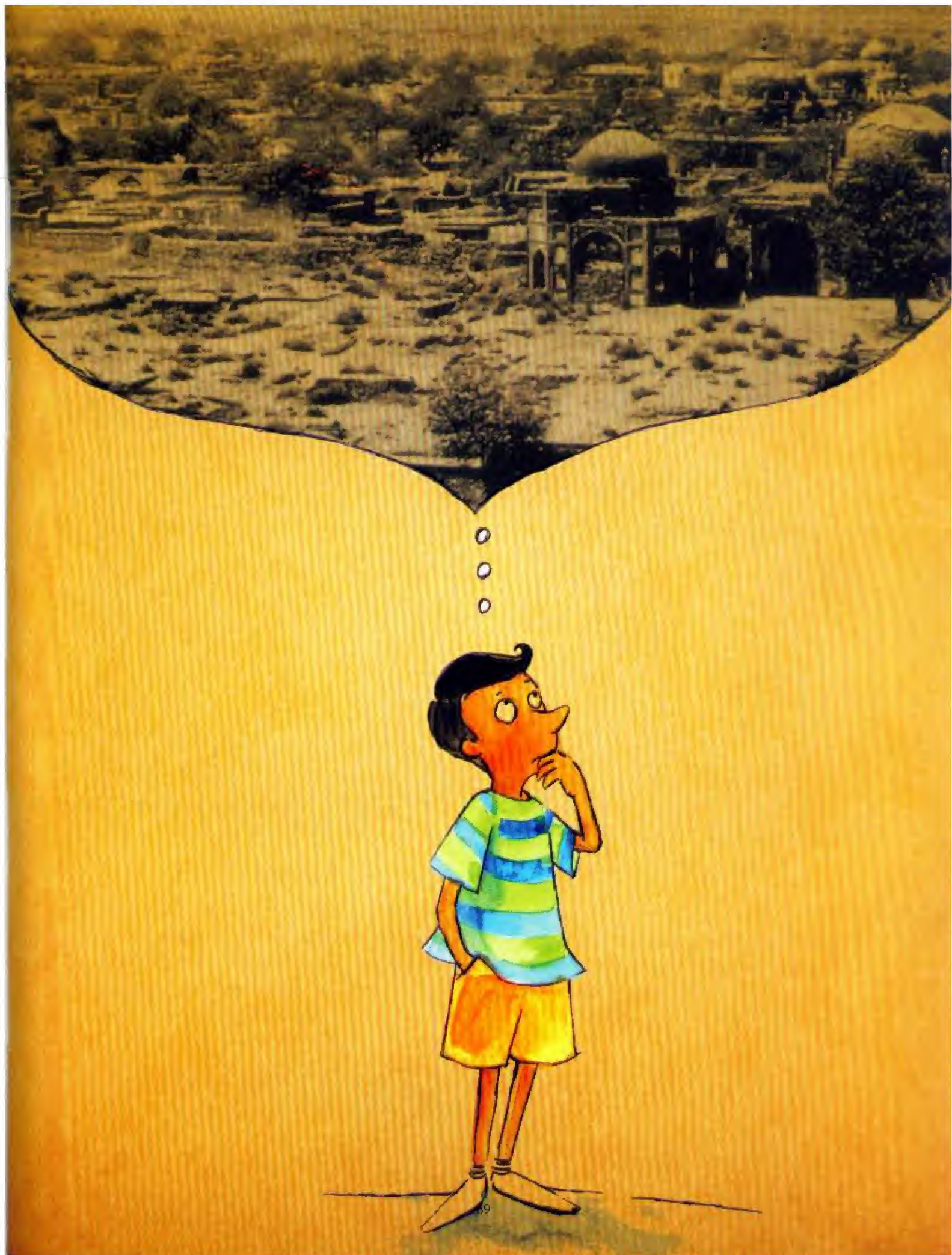


IN THE LONG PERIOD when Agra was the chief city of the emperors, the older cities of Delhi – Lalkot, Siri, Tughlaqabad, and Ferozeshah Kotla – became deserted. Farmers used the empty spaces to plant crops, and the buildings as shelters for their cattle.

After 1648, Shah Jahan built a city north of Humayun's Dinpanah. It was called Shahjahanabad. The area south of this city came to be known as 'Jungle Baahar' (the jungle outside the wall) and 'Khandraat Kalaan' (the great ruins).

However, two areas were never deserted – Mehrauli (near the dargah of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki), and Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. With continuous care, Humayun's Tomb did not become a 'great ruin.' The emperors made regular visits, and stayed in tent-pavilions in the garden. They made donations, the poor were given meals there, and it was used as a *madrassa* (school).

It is regarded as fortunate to be buried near a dargah, and there are graves of over 160 members of the imperial family inside Humayun's Tomb.



WANDERING THROUGH NIZAMUDDIN



Samir and Leela wander through the area outside Humayun's Tomb. They discover that, apart from Amir Khusrau, the graves of three other famous poets of Delhi are in Nizamuddin.



RAHIM

RAHIM (Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khanan) was Akbar's commander-in-chief. He was a great scholar, and wrote poetry in many languages. His tomb was almost as large as that of Humayun. Unfortunately, the sandstone and marble slabs that covered it were removed 130 years later to be used at the tomb of Safdarjung (Governor of Awadh) in Delhi.



JAHANARA

PRINCESS JAHANARA, Shah Jahan's daughter, is also remembered as a poetess. Her poem, inscribed on her grave, reads:

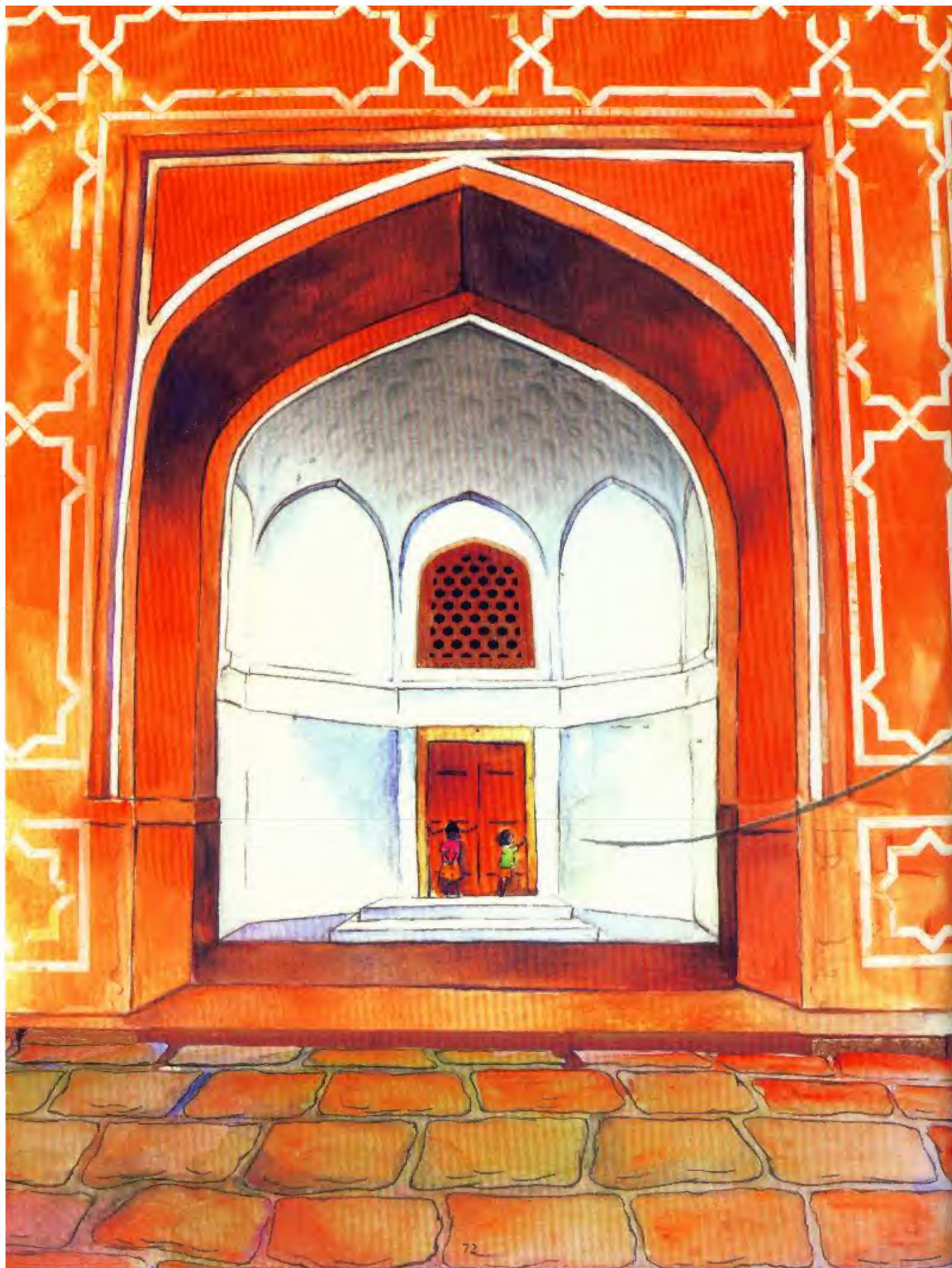
*Baghair sabza naposhad kasi mazaar-e maraa,
Ke qabr posh-e gharibaan hamin giyaah bas ast.*

Let nothing cover my grave save the green grass,
For grass is enough as a covering for the grave of
the humble.

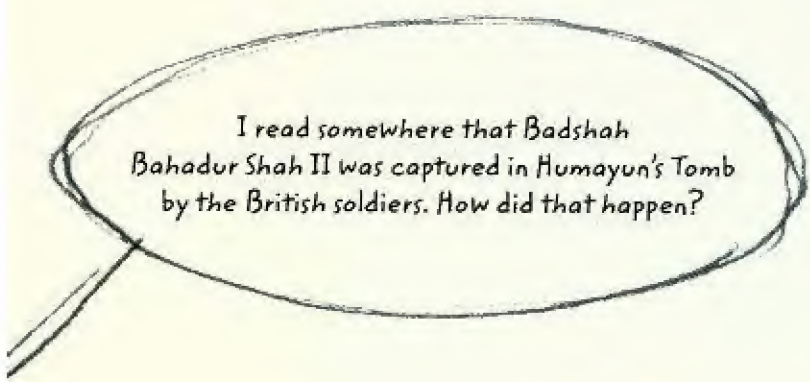


GHALIB

ASADULLAH KHAN 'GHALIB,' the very popular 19th century AD poet, was also buried near the Saint's dargah.



THE END OF BABUR'S DYNASTY

A hand-drawn speech bubble with a long tail pointing towards the bottom left. Inside the bubble is a question in italics.

*I read somewhere that Badshah
Bahadur Shah II was captured in Humayun's Tomb
by the British soldiers. How did that happen?*

IN SEPTEMBER 1857, Bahadur Shah II left the Red Fort and reached Humayun's Tomb by boat. Just as, over 300 years earlier, Humayun had fled from Sher Khan, Bahadur Shah too was fleeing from an enemy – the British soldiers.

Bahadur Shah was a very old man, and could not flee far as Humayun had done. The soldiers reached the tomb, and captured him. He was exiled to a prison in Yangon, in Burma, with his wife and son. Three years later, he died there, sad and lonely. This marked the end of Babur's dynasty.

At about this time, the Government of India took charge of historic buildings, including Humayun's Tomb. These buildings were now called 'monuments,' and were 'protected' by the Archaeological Survey of India. Nobody could live in them, but everyone could enter and walk through them. By a later rule, the monuments were open to visitors only from sunrise to sunset.

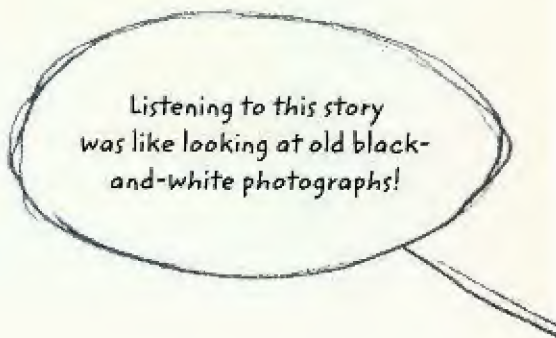
REMEMBERING TIMES PAST



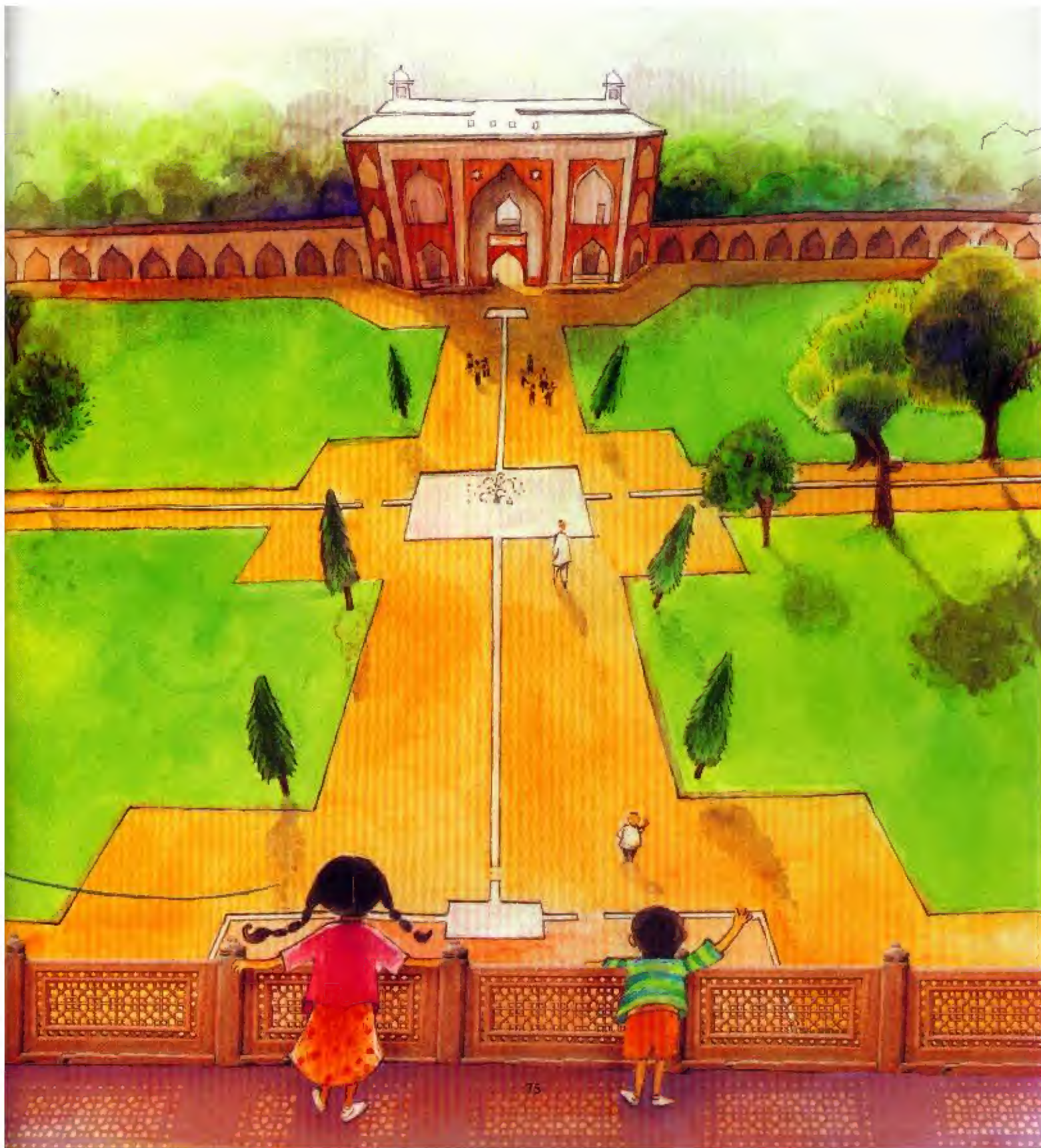
IN THE 150 YEARS after the Archaeological Survey took over the care of many buildings in Delhi, the city has expanded, and extends many miles in all directions around Humayun's Tomb.

Ruskin Bond, who writes books for children, described living in Delhi as a boy of ten, in the winter of 1944: "I lived [with my father] in a large tent...near Humayun's Tomb. The area is now a very busy part of urban Delhi but in those days it was still a wilderness of scrub jungle, where black buck and nilgai roamed freely."

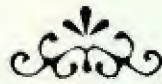
Others have many memories of Humayun's Tomb as well. In 1947, after the partition of India, the tomb's garden was used as a camp for hundreds of people coming to Delhi from Pakistan.



Listening to this story
was like looking at old black-
and-white photographs!







And what will Samir and Leela remember when they are grown up?

How they saw stonecutters, craftsmen, and gardeners carefully restoring the original beauty of Humayun's Tomb and Garden, so that many years later, people might marvel at it.

And so we reach the end of our story – the story of the Dargah and the Tomb – two islands of peace in a large city.

Now it is time for you, who have joined Leela and Samir in exploring Humayun's Tomb, to write your stories about our interesting city...



❦
MORE TO EXPLORE



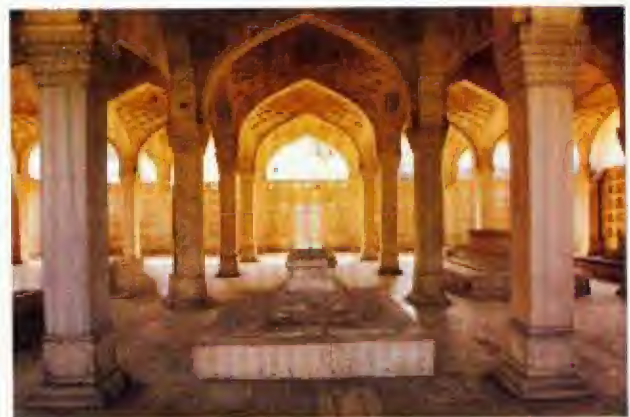
ISA KHAN'S TOMB



AFSARWALA



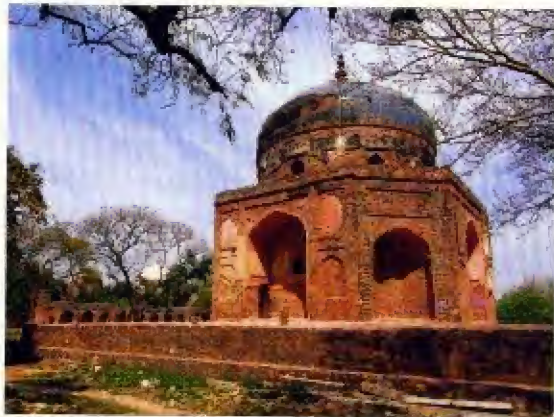
CEILING OF SUNDAR BURJ



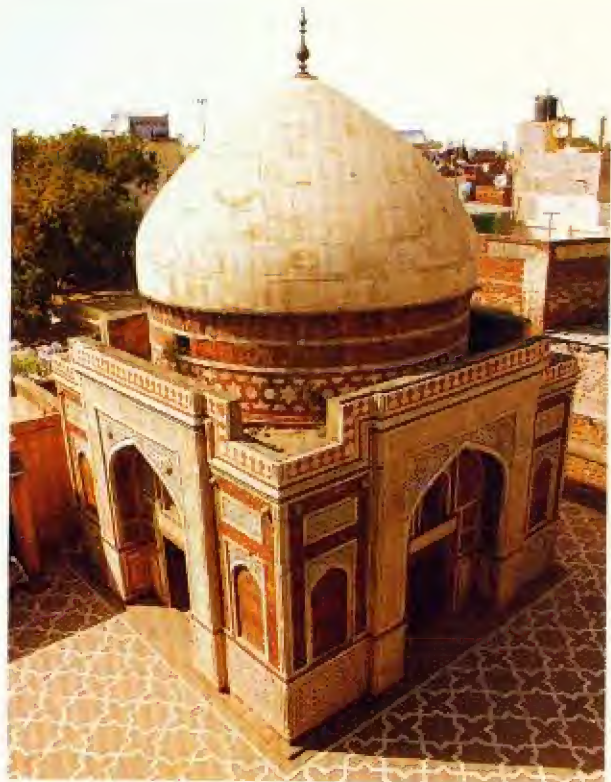
CHAUSAT KHAMBA



KHANEKHANAN'S TOMB



NILA GUMBAD



ATGAH KHAN'S TOMB



LAKKARWALA



BARA BATASHEEWALA



JAMAAT KHANA MOSQUE



GHALIB'S TOMB



HUMAYUN'S TOMB

OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

EMPEROR Humayun's garden-tomb was built by Indian and Persian craftsmen on a scale far grander than any tombs. The monumental scale achieved here was to become the defining feature of Mughal architecture.

Adjoining Humayun's Tomb are several earlier Mughal-era garden-tombs - Nila Gumbad, Isa Khan's enclosure, Bu Halima's tomb, Batashewala Complex, the Sunderwala complex, among others. In the larger Nizamuddin area, there are over 100 monuments, dating from the 13th century onwards, making it one of the densest ensembles of medieval Islamic buildings in the world. The area also represents over seven centuries of living heritage and associated music, food, rituals and performance culture.

The Archaeological Survey of India and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture are presently engaged in an urban renewal project which aims not only to conserve many of these monuments, but also to improve the quality of life for local communities by linking the conservation effort with cultural revival programmes, and providing education, vocational training, health-care and sanitation infrastructure. The Ford Foundation is co-funding a cultural revival programme and the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust is co-funding the conservation of Humayun's Tomb.

For project details visit www.nizamuddinrenewal.org or follow the project on www.facebook.com/NizamuddinRenewal





Who built Emperor Humayun's Tomb?
What is a double dome?
How tall is the dome's golden finial?
Why is the garden called a *Char Bagh*?
How was the garden used?

Why here?

Answers to these and many
other questions are in this book!
Let's Explore Humayun's Tomb.



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

